

AN ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL EXERCISE AND  
THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF CLERGY

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF  
GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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MAY 2012





I dedicate this work  
to my loving wife Jan,  
son Andrew, daughter Janelle,  
parents Edwin and Lois Cowper.  
Thank you for your love and support.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary has provided the helpful instruction, manageable steps, and interactive support for the successful completion of this thesis-project. My mentor, Dr. Kenneth Swetland, offered wisdom, a keen eye, guidance, and supportive feedback. My reader, Dr. David Currie, Director of the Doctor of Ministry program, and his D.Min. staff have provided fantastic support during my doctoral experience. Dr. Bryan Auday's involvement was instrumental in the development of the two questionnaires and his willingness to collect the clergy responses and generate reports for me to analyze the data was indispensable. Linda Triemastra of Gold Leaf Editorial Services helped me get off to a great start at the Doctor of Ministry Writing Track, August 8-11, 2011. All of these individuals cheered, "You can do it."

The church family at Moncton First Church of the Nazarene also cheered for me. They offered me six weeks of education leave and a three month sabbatical, which enabled me to focus entirely on this project. My associate, Rev. Patricia Rossiter, my youth pastor Rev. Matthew Barbour and my lay leaders provided effective ministry during my education and sabbatical leave. This enabled me to be fully devoted on the development of this thesis project.

I want to thank the thirty-six clergy who responded and agreed to serve as the "Single Group Project, Pre-test/Post-test Research Study" using questionnaires. Their dedication, faithfulness, and feedback were paramount in analyzing the thesis topic.

My wife Jan has always been my #1 cheer leader. Her love, support, and encouragement is constant. Our children Andrew and Janelle are truly blessings and beloved gifts from God. My parents Edwin and Lois have always sacrificed for me.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
NIV	New International Version
Poq	Post-test questionnaire
Preq	Pre-test questionnaire

## **ABSTRACT**

This work set out to analyze the relationship between physical exercise and the spiritual life of clergy. The goal of this thesis project was to explore the impact of the personal discipline of physical activity as a necessity in being a good steward of the body while being faithful to fulfill one's pastoral call. The problem is that clergy, in a sedentary occupation, can become physically unhealthy by engaging in meaningful ministry but neglecting to take care of themselves as they care for others.

The scope of this work looks at the Apostle Paul's claim that there is value in being both physically and spiritually healthy. This work listens in on the written conversations between professional authorities as they consider how physical fitness benefits the spiritual life of clergy. This thesis-project was tested by a three month project where clergy engaged in physical exercise three days a week for thirty minutes and reflected on the impact on their spiritual lives. There is, within this thesis, evidence that a physically and spiritually healthy pastor should more aptly be able to fulfill a lifetime commitment to their call.

This thesis-project is a beacon to the church community that the apostle Paul, modern day writers, twenty-six clergy and the researcher declare a correlation between physical fitness and the spiritual life of clergy and that physical health can positively affect one's spiritual health. There is not only a link between physical and spiritual disciplines but there is a benefit to clergy, their families, and their church community when clergy are physically active. It is important for clergy to be good stewards of their bodies while developing a regular rhythm of physical activity. In so doing, they will be equipped, in a greater way, to faithfully fulfill their call.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **THE PROBLEM AND THE SETTING**

This thesis project will analyze the relationship between physical exercise and the spiritual life of clergy. The goal of this thesis project is to explore the impact of the personal discipline of physical activity as a necessity in being a good steward of the body while being faithful to fulfill one's pastoral call. In this thesis project, the term recess will characterize a cessation from the usual routine of work. Recess usually implies taking a break for a fun activity but not a disciplined focus. This project will encourage clergy to utilize recess to engage in disciplined physical exercise during a recess. What are the results of a regular rhythm of recess among clergy? The project research will point out the correlation, if any, between the physical and spiritual disciplines as tested for three months by thirty-five clergy.

This thesis project has recruited a focus group of thirty-five clergy who are prepared to engage in at least thirty minutes of recess involving any form of physical activity, three times a week for three months. A pre-test survey questionnaire will be sent to each participant before they start their exercise regime. Each clergy participant began their regime June 1, 2011 and concluded on August 31, 2011. A post-test survey questionnaire was sent to each participant following his or her focused exercise season. The researcher will analyze the data gathered. Chapter four of this project will provide an opportunity for a summation of any change of perspective on the correlation between physical exercise and the spiritual life among the clergy who participated and the focus group as a whole.

Clergy are busy people. They have various church and ministry responsibilities to fulfill. Clergy have parishioners to minister to and they often have their own families to take care of. John Sanford in *Ministry Burnout* says, “The job of the ministering person is never finished.”<sup>1</sup> As a result, clergy sometimes neglect to take care of themselves physically.

This project will explore the following questions: Has ministry prevented a rhythm of exercise among clergy? Has exercise been a priority among clergy? Have challenges pushed recess away? How are spiritual disciplines and physical disciplines linked? Is there a correlation between physical exercise and spiritual exercises? Paul Borthwick in *Feeding your Forgotten Soul* points out that, “We all need to get away from our routines for regular time to read, think, plan and rest.”<sup>2</sup>

This project will highlight the importance of inserting or initiating a discipline of recess as a means of getting away from the routine of ministry and enabling an effective lifetime fulfillment of the call. Many clergy are so busy with church and ministry that they neglect taking the time to get away for recess. Jesus himself would often walk to the wilderness. Daniel Spaite in *Time Bomb in the Church: Defusing Pastoral Burnout* writes, “Go to the wilderness. Go often! As important as your ministry is, as significant as your vision for God’s work has become, as urgent as your calling burns within, that’s how important, significant, and urgent His call to you is.”<sup>3</sup>

Clergy need to get away and take care of their bodies. A number of the resources, which will be explored in chapter three, will allude to the fact that one cannot separate

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<sup>1</sup> John A. Sanford, *Ministry Burnout* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), 17.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Borthwick, *Feeding Your Forgotten Soul* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 98.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Spaite, *Time Bomb in the Church: Defusing Pastoral Burnout* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1999), 127.

body, mind and spirit. It is important for clergy to maintain a level of health spiritually, physically, emotionally and mentally. Spaite also says, "God does not separate the spiritual, mental, and physical aspects of human life. When He created man, He created him with these dimensions in seamless unity. The Bible reveals that God understands us as a whole: spirit, soul, and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23)."<sup>4</sup>

This researcher expects to examine any changes in physical, spiritual, and emotional health among clergy following a three month regime of physical exercise. Is there any change of perspective among clergy following a focused exercise regime? Are there changes in the test group as a whole following an exercise regime? What are the benefits of recess? Is there a correlation between physical discipline and spiritual discipline? Can an exercise regime among clergy contribute to longevity in ministry and fulfillment of the call.

The data gathered from the thirty-five clergy pre-test and post-test questionnaires will include observations, revelations, difficulties, and benefits. It is expected that this information will be both stimulating and thought-provoking.

On September 8, 2006 *The Evangelical Covenant Newswire* reported a study discussed by Mary Chase-Ziolek who is the director of the Center for Faith and Health and associate professor of Health Ministries at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago. She is quoted as declaring, "Clergy health is a significant challenge facing today's churches, as reflected in a 2001 study of clergy health by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America," This study found that stress, depression, obesity, lack of physical activity, high blood pressure and heart disease were significant health problems

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<sup>4</sup> Spaite, *Time Bomb in the Church: Defusing Pastoral Burnout*, 116.

for pastors. Chase-Ziolek says, "These problems influence not only the pastor's well being, but may also affect the ministry of the church."<sup>5</sup>

The original study referred to by the Evangelical Covenant Church was conducted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Division for Ministry and Board of Pensions. It was entitled "Ministerial Health and Wellness 2002" study. In an article entitled "How Healthy Are Our Pastors?" Gwen Halaas, an ELCA member and physician who directs the ELCA Ministerial Health and Wellness project highlights:

This study found that during a one-year period, 16 percent of male clergy and 24 percent of female clergy suffered from depression compared to 6 percent of U.S. men and 12 percent of U.S. women. It also says that nutrition, high blood pressure and heart disease are areas of concern. The report describes a clergy's job as sedentary, "with visits done by car, often associated with food or a fast-food stop for quick nourishment." The report even describes leading worship, which includes mostly sitting and standing, as a sedentary experience.<sup>6</sup>

Roy Oswald in *Clergy Self-Care* documents a third study which was completed twenty five years ago but is pertinent to this discussion today. *The July 1987 Pastoral Ministry Newsletter* reported on a survey of clergy. Of those parish clergy between the ages of thirty-five and fifty, ninety-four percent had no clearly defined physical fitness program, seventy-eight percent were overweight by sixteen pounds or more, and eighty-nine percent acknowledged poor eating habits.<sup>7</sup>

As cited above the fast-food industry looms on every corner as a quick, easy accessible temptation. Many pastors have lunch and breakfast meetings in restaurants where poor eating habits can be developed. Most pastors have a lot of discretionary time. What priorities have they set and what are they filling their time with? They have the

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<sup>5</sup>The Evangelical Covenant Church, "New Program Focuses on Improving Pastors' Health," <http://blogs.covchurch.org/newswire/2006/09/08/5141> (accessed March 13, 2012).

<sup>6</sup>Cindy Novak, "How Healthy Are Our Pastors?"

[http://www.thelutheran.org/article/article.cfm?article\\_id=4464&key=19927294](http://www.thelutheran.org/article/article.cfm?article_id=4464&key=19927294) (accessed March 13, 2012).

<sup>7</sup>Roy M. Oswald, *Clergy Self-Care* (Bethesda, Maryland: The Alban Institute, 1991), 143.

weekly demands of sermon preparation, prayer, bible study, visitation, meetings with individuals, meetings with departmental leaders, and staff meetings. This involves a lot of sitting and driving from location to location. How can pastors incorporate frequent recess activities into their daily routine? The issue comes down to priorities. Is recess a priority for clergy?

Paul Borthwick points out “Spiritual health over a lifetime is built on personal pace-setting and running each day of the race faithfully.”<sup>8</sup>

This thesis project will also insert the fact that physical health over a lifetime is also built on personal pace-setting and running each day of the race faithfully and an exercise regime can positively impact not only physical health but spiritual health.

Reverend Carla Sunberg as a registered nurse and an ordained minister at the Fort Wayne Church of the Nazarene in Indiana. In an interview with *Grace and Peace* magazine, Sunberg declares,

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Recently, The Church of the Nazarene received a grant from the Lilly Endowment to explore the physical health of clergy in Indiana. Each of the four districts in Indiana participated in the research project. Since the goal of the project was to assess clergy physical health, each participant in the study completed the Personal Wellness Profile (PWP) health assessment. This assessment tool brings to light personal health practices. Once completed research findings were gleaned from the data. The data revealed that 74% of the study participants were overweight, and only 3% ate a nutritious diet on a regular basis. The majority of the group reported that regular exercise was not a part of their lifestyle.<sup>9</sup>

Canadian School systems still work recess into the daily schedule of a student’s day. A number of companies provide fifteen minute breaks for recess throughout the day. Pastors as leader’s have the opportunity to change a church’s culture and model a

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<sup>8</sup> Borthwick, *Feeding Your Forgotten Soul*, 133.

<sup>9</sup> Carla Sunberg, “A Hard Look at Clergy Health,”

<http://www.graceandpeacemagazine.org/en/magazine/current-issue/231-a-hard-look-at-clergy-health> (accessed March 13, 2012), 47.

balanced lifestyle. What are our churches doing to encourage healthy pastors and healthy people?

Halaas suggests that congregations build a "healthy culture" by doing such things as bringing nourishing foods to potlucks and serving healthful snacks rather than coffee and doughnuts each Sunday. "We also need to set expectations for lifelong learning and developing our prayer lives and devotional habits," she says. "We have to change the culture to expect healthy things, rather than do 'things as usual.'" Halaas continues, "It's not all bad news," she says. "It's simply a reminder that we have developed bad habits and have unhealthy expectations of our leaders. It's time to take that seriously and do something about it."<sup>10</sup>

What can pastors do? In *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, Anthony Mottola points out that, "The Will of God in our daily life is sufficiently manifest to us. It only remains for us to do it."<sup>11</sup>

What choices are clergy making? What priorities are clergy setting? What impact do the choices that clergy make have on their congregations, their families and themselves? Could there be a link between physical disciplines and spiritual disciplines? Are there times and seasons which affect physical and spiritual desire?

For centuries Christians have experienced the rhythms of the liturgical church calendar as a foundation of Christian worship. "Our worship also involves commemoration. The liturgical year with its round of festivals and seasons commemorates the great events of the faith and re-creates and renders contemporary those events."<sup>12</sup> Clergy experience and celebrate the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and during the rest of the year Ordinary Time. "For it

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<sup>10</sup> Novak, "How Healthy Are Our Pastors?"

<sup>11</sup> Anthony Mottola, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1964), 13.

<sup>12</sup> William H. Willimon, *Worship as Pastoral Care* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1979), 61.

is through the tradition that we actually know who we are. It is through these forms that our revelation of God has come to us.”<sup>13</sup>

It is important to know who you are. Everybody uses calendars to celebrate or observe certain events throughout the year. The changing seasons throughout the year give opportunity for people to experience highs and lows. There is occasion to focus on new activities or to reassess life. White says, “It is through actual events in historical time that this God is revealed.... Christianity talks not of salvation in general but of salvation accomplished by specific actions of God at definite times and places.”<sup>14</sup> Clergy have opportunity throughout the year to evaluate their spiritual life. Opportunity is also afforded for an evaluation of one’s physical assessment.

New Year’s resolutions are often a time when people refocus and set new goals. Ironically these New Year’s resolutions sometimes revolve around spiritual or physical disciplines. People often decide during that season to start a new regime of exercise or daily devotions.

Clergy also experience different seasons of ministry and have opportunities to set new goals. Seasons call for refocusing and reestablishing goals and priorities. During the spring we Canadians plant, during the summer we fertilize, during the fall we harvest and during the winter we eat and anticipate the spring. Throughout the year there are opportunities for clergy to start new regiments of physical activity which could have a positive impact on their congregation, their families and their own physical and spiritual lives. It is a necessity for clergy to be good stewards of their bodies while faithfully fulfilling their pastoral call.

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<sup>13</sup> Henry E. Horn, *Worship in Crisis* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1972), 54.

<sup>14</sup> James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Westminster Press, 1986), 47.

Often times New Year's resolutions and seasonal commitments are short lived. Stormie Omartian in *Better Body Management* highlights that the key to success is the motivating factor. She writes, "You may struggle with controlling your diet and exercise, as many people do. But I encourage you to find your motivation internally rather than externally."<sup>15</sup>

What is the motivating factor for this new regime of physical activity? Is it to become physically healthy? Is the motivation to live longer and be able to fulfill the call to a lifetime of ministry?

This thesis introduction has discussed the idea that a New Year offers an opportunity for people to set new goals. It is equally as important for clergy to set and maintain goals for physical activity. A pastor who is physically fit has a higher probability of a long term level of effectiveness in fulfilling their call. Pastors, as good stewards of their bodies, have opportunities to set goals to remain physically and spiritually healthy throughout the year. Just as there are seasons of the church year so are there seasons in the life of a pastor.

No doubt some clergy tend to be more motivated to pray and read their bible as the Easter and spring season approaches. Then during Pentecost and the summer months, perhaps those practices tend to wane. October could be a month where excitement abounds as the Advent and Christmas season approaches and then the dark days of winter appear towards the end of January.

Clergy need to know themselves and their historical emotional, physical, and spiritual patterns. All of those seasons bring different high and low points, which afford

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<sup>15</sup> Stormie Omartian, *Better Body Management* (Nashville, Tennessee: Sparrow Press, 1993), 153.



different levels of stress. Clergy fatigue and stress fluctuates as seasons come and go.

Daniel Spaite advocates for clergy health and writes,

We must not underestimate the dire impact of living a chronically stressful life. No one knows for certain how frequently a pastor experiences medical complications as a result of the pastoral lifestyle. However, research certainly weights the possibility in favor of it being true. What is the problem here? Does God call this large group of people into health risks? Or do the personal decisions and lifestyle patterns predispose ministers to ill health and disease?<sup>16</sup>

What are the personal decisions that Spaite is referring to. Clergy have the opportunity to make healthy positive choices. Physical activity among clergy can be cyclical in nature. This thesis project suspects that there seems to be a link in the rhythms of physical and spiritual disciplines among clergy.

Could it be that when clergy are physically active there is a correlation and simultaneous desire for spiritual discipline. Could it be that when the body is exercised the mind is sharper and the spiritual sensitivity is peaked. Could it be that when a pastor is less active she is less spiritually alert? Oswald in *Clergy Self-Care* points out that “A good workout tends to distract our minds from troubles and also serves as a healthy release for anger and anxiety.”<sup>17</sup>

Clergy are often dealing with and faced with all kinds of problems and stresses. Clergy need to find innovative and fresh ways to maintain a rhythm of recess. Clergy need to plan to integrate physical activity routinely as a lifestyle, during all the seasons of the year. When clergy are physically active they will be more disciplined spiritually and they will reap benefits beyond measure and be able to carry out their vocation. “Another national survey by Pulpit and Pew, a research project on pastoral leadership based at

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<sup>16</sup> Spaite, *Time Bomb in the Church: Defusing Pastoral Burnout*, 114.

<sup>17</sup> Oswald, *Clergy Self-Care*, 145.

Duke Divinity School, found that 76 percent of clergy were either overweight or obese, compared to 61 per cent of the general population.”<sup>18</sup> The following abstract is from an online article entitled “How Healthy Are Our Pastors?”:

Many ELCA pastors find their work fulfilling, but lately they report feeling a little “sluggish”, “burned out”, and “down”. They tend to say their weight gain doesn't help matters, but it's difficult to exercise or eat better when putting in 60- to 70-hour workweeks. Many find it hard to take time for vacations or even personal devotions. And that's on top of worries at home, such as paying bills and spending enough time with family. Some feel cut off, alone with no one to talk to about stress and they wonder how much longer they can continue.<sup>19</sup>

This thesis project supposes that there are measurable benefits of physical exercise among the thirty-five participating clergy. This project assumes that physical activity among clergy will have a positive impact on the entire life of the clergyperson. The spiritual disciplines of the clergyperson will improve. The clergyperson's relationship with a spouse and family will improve. As clergy engage in physical activity, it will enable them to have a release of stress that has built up.

A healthier body will appear and give the clergy a higher degree of self esteem. They may not be as susceptible to seasonal bouts of depression. The church will benefit, because the member of the clergy will not be so physically drained and fatigued and the probability of a long-term ministry will be higher. A physically active pastor will be more alert and more fruitful. The anticipated outcome of this project is to see the positive effects of physical activity having a direct impact and benefit on the various ministries of the churches which will promote the growth of the kingdom of God through the local church. Having introduced the problem and its setting for this project, the researcher will now discuss the theological framework in chapter two.

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<sup>18</sup> Evangelical Covenant Church, *New Program Focuses on Improving Pastors' Health*.

<sup>19</sup> Novak, “How Healthy Are Our Pastors?”.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

Does the Bible support pastoral recess? Does God want pastors to be physically active according to the apostle Paul? It is clear that the apostle Paul was an advocate for physical activity. The goal of this thesis project is to explore the impact of the personal discipline of physical activity as a necessity in being a good steward of the body while being faithful to fulfill one's pastoral call as a member of the clergy. As a part of this analysis of the relationship between physical exercise and the spiritual life of clergy the theological framework in this chapter will be limited to a few selections of Pauline passages. Some commentary by a few of the authors from the literature review of chapter three will contribute to this theological reflection and framework along with some reputable commentaries.

Paul was certainly aware of the sporting events of his day and the need for physical and spiritual disciplines. The exegesis of these Pauline texts will shed new light on the importance of a rhythm of recess among clergy as being good stewards of their bodies. This chapter will link the theological framework with the importance of clergy becoming physically active for physical, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional health so that they can fulfill their pastoral call to a lifetime of ministry. How have clergy been treating their bodies? Paul tells the Corinthians to think of themselves as athletes because he also considered himself to be training and preparing like an athlete. The thirty-five clergy participants of this project will be able to experience similar athletic training. They will experience the results of a rhythm of recess as described by the following passages of scripture. Their actual project results will be disclosed and discussed in chapter four.

The following sampling of Pauline writing deal with some aspect of the correlation between physical exercise and the spiritual life of Biblical church leaders.

### You are God's Temple

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are the temple.

—1 Corinthians 3:16-17

This particular text is often misinterpreted by people to refer to individuals. It is clearly set in the context of the community of believers who are being referred to as God's temple in this passage. This pericope serves as a warning to church leaders to avoid desecrating the temple. *The NIV Application Commentary* by Craig Blomberg offers great insight:

Verses 16-17 preserve a crucial warning which is not adequately being heeded that the powerful, dynamic church leaders who consistently split congregations, engage in "witch hunts" and heresy trials against fellow Christians, and in general seek to build their own kingdoms in opposition to, rather than in cooperation with, fellow ministers may be headed down the road to outright apostasy themselves.<sup>1</sup>

F.F. Bruce offers this commentary on verse 17. "If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him: the temple of God can be destroyed or defiled by party-spirit and quarreling, so let them beware; the punishment for such sacrilege will fit the crime. For God's temple is holy: because his Spirit dwells in it, just as the tabernacle in

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<sup>1</sup> Craig Blomberg, *The NIV Application Commentary Series: 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 85.

the wilderness and temple in Jerusalem were holy because his name or his glory dwelt there.”<sup>2</sup>

Wilken quotes Origen as translated by Judith L. Kovacs in *The Church Bible*, “If any one destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him. Each person, as far as in him lies--even if he is only a stone--destroys the temple of God if he sins, and a person who provides the church with any grounds for stumbling destroys the temple of God.”<sup>3</sup>

It is important for clergy to take care of the body of Christ as it is a sacred temple. Often the clergy spend so much time taking care of the community body that they indeed neglect their own physical bodies. When a church loses a pastor to heart attack, stroke or burnout this obviously negatively affects the community of faith. Physical activity and exercise among clergy are means of preserving the body. Rediger in *Fit to Be a Pastor* and Heller in *Your Body His Temple* pick up on the temple talk referred to by the apostle Paul. Rediger says in response to this passage,

This strong language is the apostle’s warning that we not harm God’s creations. The point of this caveat is not to induce guilt and fear, but rather to point out the joyful responsibilities we have for each other’s fitness and mission, and our personal response to God’s entrusted gifts. If I read my Bible correctly, it indicates continually that we were not created for indulgence and self-centeredness but for God’s purposes of wholeness and mission. The Bible and the community of faith remind us of the difference between comfort and indulgence and faithful stewardship.<sup>4</sup>

Heller also comments on the same passage which is the theme of his book where he urges Christians to care for their bodies as God’s property:

You may ask--and quite legitimately--why a book is needed to speak to personal health care from a Christian standpoint. Isn’t that something like producing a

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<sup>2</sup> F.F. Bruce, *The New Century Bible Series: I and II Corinthians* (Goodwood Road, London: Oliphants, 1971), 45.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Louis Wilken, *The Church’s Bible, 1 Corinthians: Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 63.

<sup>4</sup> G. Lloyd Rediger, *Fit to Be a Pastor* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 70.

Christian Auto Repair Manual or a Believer's Guide for Lawn and Garden? Not at all. Remember: A Christian is in personal union with Jesus Christ. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. So, in contrast to a car or a tulip bulb, we enjoy a unique relationship with God, as His property.<sup>5</sup>

Heller suggests that Christians and this thesis project proposes specifically clergy should set the example of being a good steward of their body by taking care of their temple as God's property.

In the next passage, the apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians encourages the church to honor or glorify God with their bodies. How can a pastor take care of the congregation spiritually if they cannot take care of themselves physically?

Daniel Spaite in *Time Bomb in the Church* in direct reference and commentary on 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 encourages pastors to avoid mistreating their bodies and conversely urges clergy to take care of their bodies, "Ministry-related stress directly impacts the physical, mental, and spiritual health of a person. The reverse is also true. That is physical and mental health problems directly affect a person's ministry. This dispels the myth that we can mistreat our bodies without impacting our spiritual lives."<sup>6</sup>

The apostle Paul offers a more specific passage of scripture dealing with individuals while referring back and echoing the early warning to care for the body as a community. He calls for individual stewardship of the body in the following passage.

F.F. Bruce offers the following comment concerning this next passage which will be discussed 1 Corinthians 6:19, "the reference is to the individual believer's body as the sanctuary of the indwelling Spirit."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> A.L. Heller, *Your Body His Temple* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1981), 15.

<sup>6</sup> Daniel Spaite, *Time Bomb in the Church: Defusing Pastoral Burnout* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1999), 117.

<sup>7</sup> Bruce, *New Century Bible, 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 65.

## Honor God with Your Body

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

—1 Corinthians 6:19-20

It is interesting that a number of sources in chapter three utilized this verse in terms of physical fitness. It is popular to quote 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 in support of substance that is bad for you--not smoking, over eating etc. As an exegete digs into the meaning of this passage, one can interpret that in 1 Corinthians 6:13 “The body is for the Lord” not for sexual immorality. In 1 Corinthians 6:19 it is demonstrated that “You are not your own,” and in verse 20 “You were bought with a price.” Paul is driving home the point that the body is not for sin but for the Lord. Belonging to the Lord allows no rival claim. Paul sums up the discussion by telling believers what they are to do at the end of verse 20. “Therefore, honor or glorify God in your body.” This is where some of the writers in the literature review of the following chapter have applied this passage to physical exercise. Christians (including clergy) are to glorify God with their bodies because the Holy Spirit is living in this temple.

Robert Lundgren in his Doctoral Thesis at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary comments on this passage of Pauline literature: “A believer should care for his body since it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Paul warned the Corinthians to flee sexual immorality: “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom

you have received from God: You are not your own; you were brought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”<sup>8</sup>

Obviously this text is written to Corinthian Christians and the first line of delivery was through Christian leadership. Is someone who is overweight glorifying God with their body? Is someone who is winded going up and down the stairs honoring God? Gary Harbaugh in *Caring for the Caregiver* addresses the issue and comments on clergy who are lacking in the glorification of God with their bodies. He writes, “Some will lose all sense of physical stewardship and allow their bodies to balloon to double their normal weight--making them far less credible healers in their member’s eyes.”<sup>9</sup> Roy Oswald in *Clergy-self care* also offers commentary on the subject of glorifying God with our bodies as referred to in this passage. He offers these words:

Our bodies reflect so much more accurately what we believe than our words. We are a walking theological statement before we open our mouths. But most of us don’t take our bodies very seriously. We are influenced still by ancient Greek philosophy that saw the body as carnal and weak and the mind and spirit as highly exalted. To the Greeks, the body was something to contend with, as one might contend with leprosy. The Hebrews, on the other hand, viewed the body as part of the whole. One’s body, heart, soul, and mind were all of a piece. The body was not something to be used and eventually disposed of like a Kleenex while the mind and soul remained immortal. As Christians we do not believe in the immortality of the soul only. We also believe in the resurrection of the body.<sup>10</sup>

Clergy have an opportunity to model the fact that our bodies are a gift of God and clergy need to demonstrate the fact that they honor God with their bodies. Blomberg offers the following commentary on this passage highlighting the above mentioned transition from community application to individual application.

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<sup>8</sup> Robert Lundgren, “The Identification and Prevention of Burnout in Senior Pastors” (doctoral thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2006), 109.

<sup>9</sup> Gary L. Harbaugh, *Caring for the Caregiver* (New York, New York: The Alban Institute, 1992), vi.

<sup>10</sup> Roy M. Oswald, *Clergy Self-Care* (Bethesda, Maryland: The Alban Institute, 1991), 16.



Verses 19-20 reapply the temple imagery, with its connotations of holiness, to the bodies of individual believers. As in 3:16-17, Paul writes literally “your body.” But given the context of 12-17 it is more likely that he is still talking about individual bodies here, using what grammarians call a “distributive singular” construction. Verse 20 alludes to Jesus’ costly atonement, which should cause believers to want to glorify God out of gratitude for the salvation he has purchased for them.<sup>11</sup>

This project suspects that clergy do want to glorify God out of gratitude for salvation but as we will see throughout this thesis there is a war waging from within. Choices are made. Habits are formed. Ministry demands cry out and motivations and priorities get shifted around. There is hope for clergy who are inactive to change and become physically active:

Paul’s affirmation of the body counteracts those forms of dualism which allege that the material world, including human bodies, is irredeemable. Here Paul counters the hedonistic outgrowth of such philosophy; in chapter seven, he will combat its ascetic counterpart. Christians must always guard against a truncated gospel that seeks to save souls but not bodies or that is unconcerned for the stewardship of the earth. To the extent that the kingdom is inaugurated, we must begin to model even in this life the priorities of care for our bodies and our planet that we will be able to perfect in the life to come.<sup>12</sup>

Robert Wilkens as translated through Judith L. Kovacs quotes Theodoret who offers the following quotation and significantly highlights the correlation suggested in this thesis between the physical and the spiritual. “Glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are from God. God is creator of both our souls and our bodies. And he has not only made them but has freed them from the power of the devil. We must therefore glorify him both through the body and through the soul, doing and saying what will lead

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<sup>11</sup> Blomberg, *The NIV Application Commentary*, 127.

<sup>12</sup> Blomberg, *The NIV Application Commentary*, 128.

all to praise him.”<sup>13</sup> This next passage of scripture leaves no doubt that the apostle Paul specifically saw a correlation between the physical and the spiritual disciplines.

### Run as to Get the Prize

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore, I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

—1 Corinthians 9:24-27

F.F. Bruce after considering this passage of scripture pens the following commentary:

In a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize: the Corinthians were familiar with the rules of athletic contests, especially in the Isthmian Games which were held in their neighborhood every two years, and at which their city had the honor of presidency. At such games only the winner of the race received a prize, but in the Christian contest there may be more than one winner. It is necessary, however, to exercise self-control in all things if staying-power is to be maintained so the spiritual race is run consistently to the end of the course and the coveted prize won. This prize is not a perishable wreath like that of pine (earlier parsley or wild celery) awarded in the Isthmian Games; it was the Imperishable ‘prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus’, for which Paul pressed on ‘toward the goal’. This prize, to be awarded on the ‘day of Christ’ was his constant incentive to run straight for the tape, not aimlessly.... Paul uses similar athletic language in Galatians 2.2; Ephesians 6.1; Philippians 1:30; 2.16; 3.14; Colossians 1.29; 2.1; 4.12; 1 Thessalonians 2.2; 1 Timothy 6.12; 2 Timothy 2.3; 4.7; Acts 20.24 and Hebrews 12.1.<sup>14</sup>

This project is not going to offer commentary on all of the other passages which

F.F. Bruce cross referenced as having similar athletic language. Wilken as translated

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<sup>13</sup> Wilken, *The Church's Bible, 1 Corinthians*, 102.

<sup>14</sup> Bruce, *New Century Bible, 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 89.

through Judith L. Kovacs allows Augustine to comment on the above mentioned war waging with humanity and by inference waging within clergy:

So the flesh, as a result of its mortal condition, has, as it were, its own earthly appetites. Against these you may apply the bit and bridle. Let your Master be your ruler so that your subject may be ruled by you. Below you is your flesh; above you is your God. When you demand that your flesh serve you, you are reminded how you ought to serve your God. You pay heed to what is below you; pay heed also to what is above you. You have no laws related to your inferior; except those given by your superior. You are a servant, and you have a servant. But the Lord has two servants. Your servant is more in the power of your Lord than in your power. So you wish to be obeyed by the flesh. Can you be obeyed in all things? In all things the flesh obeys your Lord, but in all things it does not obey you. How is that you ask? You walk, you move your feet, it follows: but will it go with you as far as your desire? It is animated by you; but is it animated as much as you desire? Do you feel pain when you wish? Are you well when you wish? No, for your Lord often trains you by means of your servant. Since you were a despiser of the Lord, you deserve to be corrected by a servant.<sup>15</sup>

Augustine is saying that the appetites of people can distract us from heavenly pursuits in exchange for earthly pursuits. Clergy have choices to make and they have the opportunity to train their bodies and to run as to get the prize or not. Training is not easy but the benefits of physical training for sports can overflow into the spiritual life of a pastor if the pastor moves his or her feet.

In the *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* David Garland declares, "Self-control was touted by Socrates as the fundamental virtue and Tertullian also uses the metaphor: "Athletes are set apart for more rigid training to apply themselves to the building up of their physical strength. They are kept from lavish living, from more tempting dishes, from more pleasurable drinks. They are urged on, they are subjected to

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<sup>15</sup> Wilken, *The Church's Bible, 1 Corinthians*, 158.

tortuous toils, they are worn out. The more strenuously they have exerted themselves, the greater is their hope of victory.”<sup>16</sup>

Blomberg expands on the Pauline athletic metaphor in the *NIV Application*

*Commentary* by writing,

Yet Paul compares the evangelistic lifestyle of believers to athletes who sacrifice normal pursuits for the sake of strict training and a competitive edge. In a day when fewer and fewer Christians commit themselves to long-term pastorates, career missions, lifetime service as elders or deacons, or other multiyear ministries, we need people who will make such commitments to Christ and to a particular local body of believers. The same is true of personal spiritual discipline and holy obedience to all God’s commands.<sup>17</sup>

In 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 the apostle picks up specifically on the sports theme and the correlation between physical exercise and a person’s spiritual life. Here is the missing link. As highlighted above by Bruce and as it appears in the next quotation, Paul’s readers would have been familiar with the Athenian and Isthmian games. The events could have been staged no more than eight miles from Corinth. Paul tells the Corinthians to think of themselves as athletes because he also considered himself to be training and preparing like an athlete:

In the Greco-Roman world, athleticism was highly valued, athletes were honored, and every major city had an arena. The games were analogous to war; the events were often those associated with battle. This association of games and battle fits Paul’s notion that God’s plan is like a battle and believers must be fit and ready.... Paul invites the Corinthians to be self controlled and disciplined in all things. He doesn’t want the Corinthians to run aimlessly or to simply shadowbox but Paul urges them to keep their body under the most rigorous, deliberate discipline. This reference to “body” and its proper care surely echoes a similar point made earlier about proper temple maintenance of the body for the resident Holy Spirit.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> David E. Garland, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2003), 441.

<sup>17</sup> Blomberg, *The NIV Application Commentary*, 189.

<sup>18</sup> Leander E. Keck, *The New Interpreter’s Bible, Volume XI* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1994), 909.

It is obvious that the apostle Paul was calling on Christians of the day which included Christian leaders to live self controlled and disciplined lives. Heller in *Your Body His Temple* interprets this text, “First Corinthians 9:27 tells us that Paul buffeted (disciplined) his body so as not to be disqualified. Interesting, isn’t it? While we would be hard-pressed to build a “theology of running” on these passages, they do, nonetheless, suggest the saints were in shape.<sup>19</sup> The apostle Paul did have an awareness of the need for physical discipline and he was fully aware of the disciplined training of an athlete. Jack Graham also chimes in on the Pauline terminology in his book *Are You Fit For life*: “The apostle Paul was familiar with the sports of his day and often used sports metaphors to illustrate spiritual truth. The great apostle enjoyed the athletic arena and the lessons learned there. We see again and again how he compares the Christian life to an athletic contest.”<sup>20</sup>

A 1973 Gordon Conwell graduate named Leroy Lawrence Hamilton in his book *Jogging with God* offers his own thoughts on the theology of 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. Hamilton writes, “The apostle is comparing the earthly with the heavenly, the secular with the eternal. One crown, if it is to be obtained by the runner who wins, is perishable, while on the other hand the spiritual runner who wins the crown is imperishable. Running and jogging were glorious ancient sports, and the mighty apostle used them as examples and supreme guides to decent living, not only in the world of secularism but in light of that which is eternal.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Heller, *Your Body His Temple*, 27.

<sup>20</sup> Jack Graham, *Are You Fit For Life?* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2008), 131.

<sup>21</sup> Leroy Lawrence Hamilton, *Jogging with God* (Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania: Dorrance & Company, Inc. 1985), 17.

Pastors are to exemplify decent living and they are to be leaders of the flock. They are to set an example for the believers in life, in love, in faith, and in purity as Paul told Timothy. Paul also highlights an important fact in the following passage:

### Physical Training is of Some Value

For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

—1 Timothy 4:8 (NIV)

Lundgren, in reference to this verse, reflects, and links it with Ephesians 5:28 and proclaims, “The Bible explicitly states, ‘physical training is of some value.’ Paul recognized the value of exercise while emphasizing the eternal value and greater scope of godly character. Paul assumed that a man naturally cares for his own body when he wrote, ‘husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church.... each of you must love his wife as he loves himself.’” Paul does not condemn or degrade people for taking care of their physical bodies.”<sup>22</sup>

Bassler in her commentary on 1 Timothy raises a great point which could be interpreted as contrary to this thesis project. As one reads this next quotation it could appear that this Pauline epistle is putting down physical exercise:

The image of physical or athletic training was, like that of warfare, frequently used by hellenistic moralists to describe the effort required to attain moral or spiritual perfection. By adding a comment on the relative value of physical training and training in godliness, the author turns the metaphor against his opponents. The physical training that is of “some” value must be, in this context,

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<sup>22</sup> Lundgren, *Prevention of Burnout in Senior Pastors*, 108.

a disparaging comment on the opponents' ascetic demands. In contrast, training in godliness – for example, in the religious life the author advocates – is profitable in every way.<sup>23</sup>

Paul does say that physical training is of some value and godliness is profitable in every way. However, it would stand to reason that if an athlete was godly but physically inactive they would have a difficult time receiving the perishable reward which was highly regarded and respected. Rationality would suggest that godliness would not endorse slothfulness. However, that concept is undoubtedly a subject for another project.

This text (1 Timothy 4:8) refers to a good servant that which most likely implies one in ministerial service.<sup>24</sup> This thesis project suggests that Paul would admonish clergy to take care of their bodies spiritually by guaranteeing the same rigorous spiritual care as an athlete and husband would care for his body physically. William Barclay describes the value of both physical training and godliness. He discusses the correlation and the relationship between the physical and the spiritual:

Timothy is told that as an athlete trains his body, so the Christian must train his soul. It is not that bodily fitness is despised. The Christian faith believes the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.... Physical training is good, and even essential; but its use is limited. It develops only part of a man; and it produces only results which last for so short a time, for the body passes away. Training in godliness develops the whole man in body, mind and spirit, and its results affect not only time, but eternity as well. The Christian is not the athlete of the gymnasium, he is the athlete of God.<sup>25</sup>

As Paul was preparing Timothy for Christian leadership Paul took the opportunity to comment on his own personal example as a Christian leader.

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<sup>23</sup> Jouette M. Bassler, *Abingdon New Testament Commentaries: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1996), 84.

<sup>24</sup> Bassler, *Abingdon New Testament Commentaries*, 83.

<sup>25</sup> William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1975), 96.

## Keep the Faith and Finish the Race

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

—2 Timothy 4:7-8

This is Paul's last testimony before his final requests. He has testified to the fact that he lived and modeled what he had asked the Corinthians to do. Paul was teaching Timothy to live the same way as he did:

What we have in the first place is a moving self-testimony at the end of the career of one of the greatest of the world's movers and shakers--the Paul who effectively brought the gospel to Europe, who ensured its success as a universal religion, and who established in writing its theological character as a religion of grace and trust focused on the one God through the one Jesus Christ. We should allow the words of 4:6-8 to work on us in the way that the eulogy delivered at the funeral of a very fine person works on us--at the emotional level, to fire us not simply with admiration for that person, but with resolve to cherish the memory of that person and to allow it to influence and mold our own lives for the better.<sup>26</sup>

Paul gives testimony to the fact that he, like an athlete, has engaged himself in self disciplined spiritual activity. Paul has fought the good fight. Paul has finished the race. Paul has kept the faith and now at the finish line Paul will win the prize. One might surmise that Paul was in decent shape. He probably didn't drive to his meetings at the local fast food restaurants or Tim Horton's donut shops. Jack Graham offers this observation concerning this discussion of Pauline theological framework:

Most of us aren't accustomed to think of Paul as a fitness guru. But he was, at least according to the definition of fitness I gave you above. For instance, it was Paul who taught us that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19) and therefore not to be defiled. And Paul took his own advice as

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<sup>26</sup> Keck, *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Volume X1, 859.



a man who disciplined his physical appetites so he wouldn't fall into sin and be disqualified from receiving God's prize (1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NIV).<sup>27</sup>

Dr. Heller thinks that it is a Christian's responsibility to take care of the physical body. He refers to this as temple upkeep. If a person engages in temple upkeep there are tremendous positive spin offs in other areas of one's life. Heller quotes the apostle, "Paul said, 'I can do all things through Him who strengthens me' (Philippians 4:13). The natural man may have the desire to stay fit; the Christian has the power to stay fit."<sup>28</sup>

Clergy also have the power to stay fit. Heller encourages Christians including clergy to take care of themselves as outlined in this Pauline passage, "Philippians 4:8 says: 'Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.' Somehow, I cannot help but believe that taking care of ourselves falls within the categories of this passage."<sup>29</sup>

As insinuated above, Paul was probably in shape, he called believers and Christian leaders alike to get in shape in the same way that athletes do before they compete in their important athletic sporting events. Paul regularly resorted to the metaphor of the footrace of life as a philosophical representation of his journey through life as spiritual leader. F.F. Bruce recalls the Pauline passage addressed to the Romans 12:1 which says, "To present your bodies as a living sacrifice."<sup>30</sup> Paul's life was a living sacrifice. His influence and regular message to constantly pursue godliness like an

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<sup>27</sup> Graham, *Are You Fit For Life*, 16.

<sup>28</sup> Heller, *Your Body His Temple*, 16.

<sup>29</sup> Heller, *Your Body his Temple*, 47.

<sup>30</sup> Bruce, *New Century Bible, 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 65.

athlete. Paul sees the Christian Missionary Service and the Great Commission as a reason to take Christianity seriously and to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

The second chapter of this thesis project has considered Pauline evidence that the Bible supports pastoral recess. Therefore, it could be declared that, according to the apostle Paul, God wants pastors to be physically active. It seems clear that the apostle Paul was indeed an advocate for physical activity and he seems to imply that there is a link between spirituality and physical training. The next chapter of this thesis project will continue to explore the impact of the personal discipline of physical activity as a necessity in being a good steward of the body while being faithful to fulfill one's pastoral call by exploring what other authors have written on the subject of physical activity among clergy.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Having introduced the problem and its setting for this project, and established its theological framework it is now time to explore a plethora of resources in the literature review portion of this thesis project. These authors will converse with each other exploring and analyzing the correlations between physical exercises and the spiritual life among clergy. Each author will bring a unique perspective and contribution to the matter of developing and maintaining a rhythm of recess as a member of the clergy. An analysis of these books and articles has strengthened the exploration of the impact of the personal discipline of physical activity as a necessity in being a good steward of the body while being faithful to fulfill one's pastoral call.

#### The Physical Health of Clergy

Roy Oswald writing specifically to those called of God in *Clergy Self-Care* declares, "Whether we like it or not, our health (or lack of it) is out there."<sup>1</sup> In his book, *Fit to Be a Pastor* G. L. Rediger says, "Clergy exhibit the same symptoms of unfitness that most parishioners do."<sup>2</sup> He continues by saying, "Clergy unfitness is a shared as well as a personal problem, and responsibility.... For the health and fitness of clergy is crucial to the health and fitness of the church."<sup>3</sup>

Rediger's comment echoes the discussion in chapter two concerning the Apostle Paul admonishing the Corinthians both as a community of believers and as individual believers to take care for their bodies as temples set apart for the holy dwelling of God.

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<sup>1</sup> Roy M. Oswald, *Clergy Self-Care* (Bethesda, Maryland: The Alban Institute, 1991), 3.

<sup>2</sup> G. Lloyd Rediger, *Fit to Be a Pastor*. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), ix.

<sup>3</sup> Rediger, *Fit to Be a Pastor*, xi.

Christian author Stormie Omartian in her book *Better Body Management* writes, “The truth is, not one of us can get away with doing whatever we want with our physical bodies. Neglect or abuse will catch up to every one of us.”<sup>4</sup> Clergy unfitness could be termed neglect. Dr. Daniel Spaite’s biography describes him as being well acquainted with both the personal and professional challenges of being a pastor. Daniel is the son of a minister therefore he has experienced the commitment and challenge that full-time ministry demands. Dr. Spaite is also a medical doctor who specializes in emergency medicine; he also understands the physical, mental and emotional results of a high stress situation. Spaite describes an alarming discovery he made while working with clergy:

I was meeting with other leaders from my local church. We were reviewing the health-care benefits for the pastoral staff. I looked at the figures representing premium payments, and I thought there was a mistake. They couldn’t possibly be this high. After all, we insured our pastors through a denominational plan, expecting to lower premium costs. When I questioned the figures, those meeting with me confirmed them to be accurate. As a physician, I’m very aware that health-care costs are on the rise. I know that insurance premiums cost more than they did 10 years ago. What I did not know was that pastors, when insured as a group, may pay premiums that are three times greater than the average. To say it concerned me is an understatement. Just what does this statistic say to us?<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps, as this thesis suggests, clergy have fallen into the trap of being so concerned for their congregations and the demands of their professional life that they have neglected to care for their personal lives, specifically physical health. “Ten years ago there were few seminaries that offered even a single course on the pastor as person. Conventional wisdom was that seminarians were people preparing for ministry. Therefore, the thrust of theological training was not on the person, but on the person in

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<sup>4</sup> Stormie Omartian, *Better Body Management* (Nashville, Tennessee: Sparrow Press, 1993), 15.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Spaite, *Time Bomb in the Church: Defusing Pastoral Burnout* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1999), 105.

ministry. It still is.”<sup>6</sup> This thesis project is rooted in the seminary course *Pastor as Person*. Pastors need to be good stewards of their bodies and attend to their physical activities so that they will faithfully be able to fulfill their call with an improved quality of life. “*The American Council on Exercise* defines physical fitness as an ‘enhanced capacity that allows for an improved quality of life.’ In other words, when you are physically fit your body is improving or maintaining health, not deteriorating.”<sup>7</sup> Kasper answers the question; What is Exercise? He writes these words: “Exercise can be described as any activity that one does specifically and primarily for the body. Good exercise is goal-oriented. To be truly effective, exercise must be regular. Exercise will also alter your eating requirements. Exercise must be done correctly and exercise must also be progressive.”<sup>8</sup>

### The Benefits of Physical Exercise

Lundgren identifies the fact that, “There are six key elements in providing good self-care to our physical body so that burnout can be prevented. The first three elements are sleep, relaxation and recreation. The second three are equally important and include exercise, proper nutrition and maintaining the proper weight.”<sup>9</sup> Lundgren also writes, “As someone approaches burnout, recreation and exercise are often the first activities left out of an increasingly full schedule. But research on coping with burnout suggests that

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<sup>6</sup> Gary L. Harbaugh, *Caring for the Caregiver* (New York, New York: The Alban Institute, 1992), 3.

<sup>7</sup> Omartian, *Better Body Management*, 15.

<sup>8</sup> Rick Kasper, *How to Be Fit and Free* (Glendale, California: Regal Books, 1987), 130-135.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Lundgren, “The Identification and Prevention of Burnout in Senior Pastors” (doctoral thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2006), 37.

exercise is very important. Giving regular attention to exercise is an important factor for avoiding burnout.”<sup>10</sup>

Clergy could easily fall into the trap of neglecting themselves as they care for others. Heller in his book *Your Body His Temple* defines physical exercise. “Exercise is a continual, steady working of the muscles over a period of time.”<sup>11</sup> Rediger provides the following definition, “In the clinical sense, fitness is disciplined self-management. In the spiritual sense, fitness is blending with God’s purposes. In the everyday, physical meaning, fitness is the practice of wellness.”<sup>12</sup> Clergy need to prioritize being physically active so that they can remain healthy and stay well.

Richard Ecker in *Staying Well: Why the Good Life Is So Bad for Your Health* points out an important issue that this project suggests clergy may struggle with. “Until the twentieth century, such physical activity was not necessarily a matter of choice; it was a matter of survival. For all but a small fraction of the population, survival was achieved by the sweat of one’s brow. Now leisure is regarded as a way of life, and physical activity as something to be disdained. We don’t walk anywhere if we can possibly avoid it. We wouldn’t think of taking the stairs in a public building (if we could find them).”<sup>13</sup>

Clergy are very much a product of the society in which they live. Clergy often drive to the church, to the hospital, to meetings, and to parishioner’s homes. In today’s culture North Americans seek ease. We have fast-food, drive-thru, micro-wave, pot-luck and instant banking.

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<sup>10</sup> Lundgren, *Prevention of Burnout in Senior Pastors*, 41.

<sup>11</sup> A.L. Heller, *Your Body His Temple* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1981), 73.

<sup>12</sup> Rediger, *Fit to Be a Pastor*, 12.

<sup>13</sup> Richard E. Ecker, *Staying Well: Why the Good Life Is So Bad for Your Health* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1984), 83.

A youth pastor recently started a sports ministry in a three year old church gymnasium. When he was at the initial training meeting with the Christian sports executives seeking authorization to implement their program he was asked, “Why are you interested in starting an *Upward Sports* program?” His response brought laughter from the crowd, “I’m here because all we do is use our beautiful new gym for eating and hosting church potlucks.” When the laughter ceased the youth pastor said, “NO, I’m serious!” Pastors can influence physical fitness in their church and their society. That church had built a beautiful gymnasium but it was not being properly utilized. Many clergy are not properly using their bodies.

Clergy are tasked with providing careful instruction for their congregations spiritually. Hopefully clergy do not neglect taking care of their own spiritual lives but clergy also need to take care of themselves physically. Rick Kasper in *How to Be Fit and Free* proposes, “When you are physically inactive, your mind dictates what your body wants. When you are physically active, your body dictates what your body wants.”<sup>14</sup> There are benefits to physical activity. Howard Clinebell in *Anchoring Your Well Being* suggests that there are consequently spiritual benefits to be considered: “Christians are on target when we recognize that taking care of our bodies is an essential part of a Christian lifestyle. Doing this is really a spiritual discipline with both multiple mental and physical benefits but also spiritual benefits.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Kasper, *How to Be Fit and Free*, 156.

<sup>15</sup> Howard Clinebell, *Anchoring Your Well Being* (Nashville, Tennessee: Upper Room Books, 1997), 82.

Oswald does not limit wholeness to spiritual or physical but he discusses other dimensions in *Clergy Self-Care*. Oswald declares that “Wholeness happens on four levels simultaneously: Physical, Emotional, Spiritual, and Intellectual.”<sup>16</sup>

In *A Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise and Sports*, Robert Feeney highlights a concept that was discussed in the theological framework of chapter two: “It is noticeable how very often the Apostle Paul uses sporting images to illustrate his apostolic life and the life of the struggle of the Christian on earth.”<sup>17</sup> This dedicated Roman Catholic athlete considers the benefit to the soul when a person engages in physical activity: “What purpose would be served by the use and development of the body, of its energies, of its beauty, if it were not at the service of something noble and lasting, namely the soul? Sport which does not serve the soul is nothing more than a useless movement of the body members, making show of something which attracts for awhile, a fleeting pleasure.”<sup>18</sup>

Feeney draws the correlation between sport and the positive impact on the soul which is what is fed spiritually. As suggested in chapter two that is why the apostle Paul so frequently encouraged his leaders to be disciplined like athletes. Paul also paralleled the spiritual and physical dimensions by using the metaphor of sport. Heller draws on Paul in, “1 Thessalonians 5:23: ‘May your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete....’ If any one of these segments (Spiritual, Physical, Mental, and Emotional)

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<sup>16</sup> Oswald, *Clergy Self-Care*, x.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Feeney, *A Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise and Sports* (Arlington, Virginia: Aquinas Press, 1995), 35.

<sup>18</sup> Feeney, *Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise*, 50.



is out of proportion, the other three suffer.”<sup>19</sup> John Sanford in *Ministry Burnout* discusses the importance of finding and maintaining a balance:

So when those of us who work with our minds, our spirits, and our emotions feel exhausted and physically depleted, we need to remember that while our bodies are feeling the effect of our disorder, the body itself is not depleted. In fact, the cells of the body may be stored with glycogen, physically ready for action because our work has not required its use. Thus the body may be the source for new energy; use of the body may get energy moving again and revive us spiritually.<sup>20</sup>

Sanford declares physical activity as a remedy in reviving spiritual deficiency. Likewise, Gordon Conwell graduate, Robert Lundgren, in his doctoral thesis, entitled “Prevention of Burnout in Senior Pastors” identifies, “prevention of burnout was accomplished by emphasizing the need for self-care of the whole person--physical, spiritual, relational, emotional, mental and professional.”<sup>21</sup> Throughout Feeney’s aforementioned work, he highlights the Roman Catholic historical support of sports and physical exercise:

The Church gives willing support to such initiatives. The Second Vatican Council observes in this regard that people are enriched with mutual understanding also “by means of physical exercise and sport, which can help.... to foster friendly relations between peoples of all classes, countries, and races” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 6). We all know that sport is a highly disciplined exercise of the human body. It seeks to develop a person’s physical faculties, such as strength, stamina, skill--all working together towards a harmony of movement and action. Through sport, we try to attain physical excellence, by means of necessary training and practice. Its aim is perfection in a given event, as well as the breaking of significant records, as has already happen during these games.<sup>22</sup>

Pastors need to be highly disciplined. Physical exercise can benefit a pastor.

Pastors, who are sedentary, need to move from physical inactivity to action and physical

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<sup>19</sup> Heller, *Your Body His Temple*, 20.

<sup>20</sup> John A. Sanford, *Ministry Burnout* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), 108.

<sup>21</sup> Lundgren, *Prevention of Burnout in Senior Pastors*, 197.

<sup>22</sup> Feeney, *Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise*, 84.

movement. Pastors, like athletes need strength, stamina, and skill for effective ministry. In the same way that athletes train for sporting events, pastors, need to refine their physical bodies through physical activity. “St. Thomas Aquinas said it well when he referred to exercise and sports as perfecting the body as an instrument of the mind and makes the mind a more refined instrument for the search and communication of truth.”<sup>23</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas clearly indicates that one dimension of the body affects another dimension when he draws a correlation between body and mind. Jack Graham contributes to the thesis chapter two discussions and warns, “We’re not to obsess over our physical fitness because it is not an end in itself but simply a means to the end of glorifying God and enjoying to the fullest the life He has given us. Paul told Timothy, ‘Train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come’ (1 Timothy 4:7-8).”<sup>24</sup>

Godliness is undoubtedly important. This thesis project will strive to demonstrate that both the apostle Paul and modern day writers declare a correlation between physical fitness and the spiritual life and that physical health can positively affect spiritual godliness as Feeney declares, “Those who pursue spiritual fitness, athletes of the spirit, are like athletes of the field; loyal to the training rules and training aids; not allowing tiredness nor any obstacle to halt them until their goal is reached, eternal life with God.... They know that self-discipline developed through physical fitness and sports will help them develop a proper mindset, a proper attitude in striving for eternal life with God.”<sup>25</sup>

Physical Exercise needs to be an important priority in the weekly activity of clergy as they strive to be good stewards of their bodies so that they can faithfully fulfill

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<sup>23</sup> Feeney, *Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise*, 115.

<sup>24</sup> Jack Graham, *Are You Fit for Life?* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2008), 59.

<sup>25</sup> Feeney, *Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise*, 119.

their call to a lifetime of ministry. Clinebell says, "Aerobic exercise is the most vital in maintaining high levels of wellness and increasing your probable life expectancy."<sup>26</sup>

Oswald beckons the following to call for a healthy pastor, "Regular exercise is also one of the best ways to counter the effects of aging. According to studies by the *American Physical Therapy Association, Geriatrics Section*. The person who exercises regularly is stimulating bone and muscle tissue and keeping them strong and flexible. The heart and lungs also benefit substantially from regular exercise."<sup>27</sup>

Obviously if clergy remain healthy, as good stewards of their bodies, by physical activity, they could reap the benefits of warding off the effects of aging. Oswald in *Clergy Self-Care* writes, "A good workout tends to distract our minds from troubles and also serves as a healthy release for anger and anxiety."<sup>28</sup> Oswald goes on to declare the benefit of a spiritual life, which comes through physical activity:

Beyond the conditioning and weight control, vigorous exercise gives one an emotional and spiritual lift. I am not the only one who writes sermons and presentations while on a run. If I have a sermon to prepare, after I have done some basic research on a biblical text I put on my running shoes and start running. After an hour of pumping up hills and sweating it out, the sermon outline is usually fairly clear. I have lots of life examples that relate to the text. I don't know why my creativity is enhanced so much during a run, but it is. Some claim that vigorous exercise pumps more blood through your brain. A colleague, Tom Tupper, always keeps a notepad hanging on a clipboard on his porch so he can write down ideas that have occurred to him on his run. The notepad looks pretty ratty by now because he writes things down when his hands and arms are dripping with sweat.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Clinebell, *Anchoring Your Well Being*, 84.

<sup>27</sup> Oswald, *Clergy Self-Care*, 142.

<sup>28</sup> Oswald, *Clergy Self-Care*, 145.

<sup>29</sup> Oswald, *Clergy Self-Care*, 145.

Another Gordon Conwell graduate wrote a unique book entitled *Jogging with God*. In it, Leroy Lawrence Hamilton wrote about the benefits that he experiences. He declares, "I cannot describe the awareness of God that a jogger feels and the beauty of the rising of the sun when all of a sudden he is no longer in the dark but in the light."<sup>30</sup> Hamilton throughout his work speaks highly of the spiritual highs that he experiences as he jogs with God.

He describes his daily routine, "Exercising early in the morning brings a physical and spiritual strength to the mind and body. This period of worship and meditation does more for the body than any medicine that could be prescribed by a doctor. Jogging with God is indeed a glorious experience which the mind cannot adequately explain. I constantly thank God for the oceans, the beaches, the boardwalks, and the spiritual blessings I receive."<sup>31</sup>

Hamilton further expresses the correlation that he senses in the various dimensions of his being. "The jogger who prays as he jogs receives complete fulfillment-physical, psychological, and spiritual. Praying while jogging renews the soul and uplifts the whole inner being of the jogger, and he can feel God's presence."<sup>32</sup>

Getting started and then maintaining an exercise regime clearly requires discipline and motivation. Omartian says, "Better body management begins in the heart."<sup>33</sup> Pastors can become too busy in the day to day routines of their busy ministry. They can be as Heschel will say simply filling time and space. If that is the case, it becomes easy to turn to passive rest, sitting on the couch rather than running on the streets.

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<sup>30</sup> Hamilton, *Jogging with God*, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Hamilton, *Jogging with God*, 10.

<sup>32</sup> Hamilton, *Jogging with God*, 13.

<sup>33</sup> Omartian, *Better Body Management*, 152.

## Finding a Balance

Abraham Joshua Heschel was said to be one of the most widely respected and loved religious leaders. In his book *The Sabbath*, his thesis is that Sabbath represents a day of separation from space and the material things that fill it, a day of devotion to time and the eternity that fills it. Heschel says, “The Bible is more concerned with time than with space. It sees the world in the dimension of time. It pays more attention to generations, to events, than to countries, to things; it is more concerned with history than with geography. To understand the teaching of the Bible, one must accept its premise that time has a meaning for life which is at least equal to that of space; that time has a significance and sovereignty of its own.”<sup>34</sup>

It is important for clergy to find a rhythm of recess as well as rest. Sabbath rest is important. God demands Sabbath. Taking time off for vacation and regular days off are important for clergy fruitfulness, longevity, and effectiveness. A *New York Times* August 1, 2010 article entitled *Taking a Break from the Lord's Work* says,

Public health experts who have led the studies caution that there is no simple explanation of why so many members of a profession once associated with rosy-cheeked longevity have become so unhealthy and unhappy. But while research continues, a growing number of health care experts and religious leaders have settled on one simple remedy that has long been a touchy subject with many clerics: taking more time off. ‘We had a pastor in our study group who hadn’t taken a vacation in 18 years,’ said Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell, an assistant professor of health research at Duke University who directs one of the studies. ‘These people tend to be driven by a sense of a duty to God to answer every call for help from anybody, and they are virtually called upon all the time, 24/7.’<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1951), 6.

<sup>35</sup> Paul Vitello, “Taking a Break From the Lord’s Work.”

[http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/02/nyregion/02burnout.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/02/nyregion/02burnout.html?_r=1) (accessed March 13, 2012).

As described above clergy need to find that rhythm of rest and this project highlights the need for recess. Rather than sitting on the couch some clergy need to celebrate time by taking a Sabbath walk. It takes discipline to fill ones time with recess. Heschel declares, "The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week, we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath, we try to become attuned to holiness in time. It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world."<sup>36</sup>

Feeney writes about an activist who recognized God in creation and was devoted to developing his personal spiritual life through physical activity and ritual:

Another athlete of the spirit recognized by the Church is Blessed Pier Fiorgio Frassati, whose portrait appears on the cover of Feeney's book. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II on May 20, 1990. "The Pope spoke of him as being a model for athletes on April 12, 1984. Pier was open to the values of sports. He was an avid mountain climber who valued it as a means of developing character. He admired, in the pure atmosphere of the mountains, the magnificence of God. In this pristine environment of the mountains, he found it easy to contemplate, seeing God reflected in His creation. This led him to lift up his mind and heart to God in a spirit of prayer, offering praise and gratitude to God. He was also an able skier, never missing making a visit to the Blessed Sacrament after skiing. He was very devoted to the Mass, attending it and receiving Communion every day."<sup>37</sup>

Feeney points to a teaching of Pope John Paul II in Rome at the Athletic World Championships on September 2, 1987. He continues his discourse by saying,

Sport, as you well know, is an activity that involves more than the movement of the body; it demands the use of intelligence and the disciplining of the will. It reveals, in other words, the wonderful structure of the human person created by God as spiritual being, a unity of body and spirit. Athletic activity can help every man and woman to recall that moment when God the Creator gave origin to the human person, the

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<sup>36</sup> Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 10.

<sup>37</sup> Feeney, *Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise*, 118.

masterpiece of his creative work. As the Scriptures tell us: ‘Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.’ (Genesis 2:7)<sup>38</sup>

Disciplined exercise will help the body and the spirit of a clergyperson.

Hippocrates said, “Exercise strengthens while inactivity wastes.”<sup>39</sup> Rediger writes,

“Achieving fitness requires some hard work to begin with, and then a disciplined lifestyle that becomes increasingly comfortable and valuable.”<sup>40</sup>

Chapter two of this thesis project alleged that the apostle Paul, firmly believed that there is a correlation between physical disciplines and spiritual disciplines. Rediger says that a person needs a healthy Body, Mind and Spirit in order to be totally healthy: “Health is a choice and fitness is a discipline.... Part of our denial process is imagining that we can become fit in one part of ourselves while remaining flabby in the others.”<sup>41</sup> Rediger purports that a person needs fitness in Body, Mind, and Spirit and he offers the following advice to pastors whom he is counseling:

Now you are making a conscious choice about body-mind-spirit fitness: Will you begin, or continue, a fitness quest? For most Americans, unfitness is the attitude of choice, even if we do not realize we’ve made the choice.... If you choose to remain unfit, this choice and condition will continue your unfitness of body, mind, and spirit and will occasion further deterioration. If you choose fitness and continue to make the small choices that facilitate fitness, you will experience better health and the other benefits of body-mind-spirit fitness.... Fitness is a choice, an attitude, a pilgrimage, rather than a static condition. It is literally a commitment, a covenant with yourself and with God. By beginning a fitness quest, you are already participating in fitness and making it easier and easier to continue on into a fitness lifestyle. When you say, I choose fitness, the benefits are enormous!<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Feeney, *Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise*, 85.

<sup>39</sup> Feeney, *Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise*, 87.

<sup>40</sup> Rediger, *Fit to Be a Pastor*, 25.

<sup>41</sup> Rediger, *Fit to Be a Pastor*, 17.

<sup>42</sup> Rediger, *Fit to Be a Pastor*, 65.

As Jack Graham in *Are You Fit For Life* says, “Most people simply need to get moving. Walking is probably the oldest form of exercise in human history, and now we know that simple walking improves health and mental well-being. Our ancestors enjoyed the benefits of exercise without knowing all the physiology and psychology, while we know all the physiology and psychology but don’t enjoy the benefits.”<sup>43</sup>

Dr. Spaite provides an important overview of theological, medical, and historical background on the link between the physiological and the spiritual:

Many people act as if there is no connection between good health habits and a person’s spiritual life. However, the Bible clearly shows a link between the two. For example, a substantial portion of Levitical law had to do with health issues. Analyzing these laws from a medical perspective reveals that Leviticus was a sophisticated public health document. Actually, this should not surprise us. Long before humans had any knowledge about infectious disease principles or contagious microscopic agents, God fully understood health, disease, and the human body. That’s why we need to obey His health-related commands even when we do not understand them. It is easy to look at the ancient Hebrew culture and consider them ignorant regarding health issues as compared to our sophisticated knowledge and advanced technology. This simply is not true. In fact, our current understanding of health and disease remains quite minuscule, given the complexity of the human body. In my medical research, I repeatedly discover that the actual cause of most diseases remains entirely unknown. Because of this, it is important for us to trust the plan God lays out for us in Scripture. Our minute understanding of how the human body works is no match for the knowledge and insight of the One who created us. He continues to control every physiological process, including the ones we do not understand.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Graham, *Are You Fit For Life*, 57.

<sup>44</sup> Spaite, *Time Bomb in the Church*, 118.



### The Father of Aerobics: Kenneth Cooper

Jack Graham was apparently Dr. Kenneth Cooper's pastor at the time of writing his book *Are You Fit For Life*. Both Feeney in his *Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise and Sport* and G. Lloyd Rediger in *Fit to Be a Pastor: A Call to Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Fitness* quote and refer to Kenneth Cooper M.D., M. Ph., who is apparently the father of Aerobics. He has an Aerobics Center in Dallas and is convinced that being physically fit can help one's psychological fitness. Robert Feeney highlights and discusses the following benefits to exercise:

1. Aerobic exercise, done continually for at least 20 minutes, strengthens the heart, the pump of life.
2. Aerobic exercise increases the amount of oxygen we take into our system
3. Exercise relieves tension from muscles and helps us to relax.
4. Aerobic exercise provides psychological benefits.
5. Exercise helps to control obesity.
6. Exercise, depending on the type, increases size, strength, & endurance of the muscles.
7. Vigorous exercise makes your bones grown in size, thickness, and strength.
8. Exercise is also known to keep the digestive and excretory organs in good shape.<sup>45</sup>

### The Father of Methodism: John Wesley

Clinebell writes about a landmark book written by John Wesley in 1747 entitled *Primitive Physic: or An Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases*. This book evidently became *The Standard Home Doctor Book* for almost one hundred years and was used widely in both England and America. Clinebell declares, "Wesley had a philosophy and theology of natural good health and understood that God, the 'Author of Nature,' brings healing through many channels, including good self care and various

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<sup>45</sup> Feeney, *Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise*, 87- 95.

natural substances.”<sup>46</sup> One can see that John Wesley, according to Clinebell, tells us to consider a correlation between the physical and the spiritual dimensions of the body:

Consider these gems from Wesley’s *Plain Easy Rules*: ‘The air we breathe is of great consequence to our health.... Every one that would preserve health should be as clean and sweet as possible in their homes, clothes, and furniture.... Water is the wholesomest of all drinks; quickens the appetite and strengthens the digestion the most.... A due degree of exercise is indispensably necessary to health and long life. Walking is the best exercise for those who are able to bear it.... The open air, when the weather is fair, contributes much to the benefit of exercise. We may strengthen any weak part of the body by constant exercise.... The passions (emotions) have a greater influence upon health than most people are aware of...’<sup>47</sup>

In chapter one this project discussed the susceptibility of the pastoral problem of seasonal ups and downs. People have been known to experience depression during the dark days of winter. Renowned aerobic authority Dr. Cooper’s adds to John Wesley’s earlier assumptions:

That being physically fit can definitely help in being psychologically fit. In studies conducted at his *Clinic and Institute for Aerobic Research*, exercise has shown to help people better able to handle stress, gain in feelings of well-being, and help in reducing depression. Dr. Cooper attests to the conviction that aerobic exercise helps people in improving their self-image, and along with improved self-image, become more confident and outgoing. Robert S. Brown, M.D., a psychiatrist at the University of Virginia, and Keith Johnsgard, Ph.D., author of the book, *The Exercise Prescription for Depression and Anxiety*, both believe that running, brisk walking, swimming and bicycling may definitely be the best prescription for mild depression. Dr. Brown finds that aerobic exercise works better than pills in controlling moderate depression.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Clinebell, *Anchoring Your Well Being*, 93.

<sup>47</sup> Clinebell, *Anchoring Your Well Being*, 93.

<sup>48</sup> Feeney, *Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise*, 91.

## Maintaining a Balance

Jack Graham chimes in on the topic of a correlation between the physical and spiritual life in addition to the psychological benefits of exercise. He writes, “There is really no way to separate the physical and spiritual components of our human makeup because they are so intricately related. Whoever thinks being spiritual allows us to ignore the physical hasn’t read God’s Word very carefully.” Graham continues, “Paul’s prayer for the believers at Thessalonica gives us a big clue to the importance God places on our bodies: ‘Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ (1 Thessalonians 5:23 NIV).”<sup>49</sup>

Throughout his work, Jack Graham discusses the body, mind, and spirit: “The Christian is body, soul, and spirit, and it is the balance of life that matters most. Graham says that it is important to maintain a balance in one’s life and he quotes Dr. Adrian Rogers who according to Graham said, “With our spirits, we have spiritual life and relate to the world above us; with our souls, we have emotional life and relate to the world within us; and with our bodies we have physical life and relate to the world around us. When we’re right spiritually, we’re holy, when we’re right emotionally, we’re happy, and when we’re right physically, we’re healthy.”<sup>50</sup> Rediger uses the same terminology, Rediger puts it this way, “When we pause and understand what Jesus meant by living life to its fullest, we can find out what health really is. It is body-mind-spirit fitness. Our struggle then becomes a quest.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Graham, *Are You Fit For Life*, 49.

<sup>50</sup> Jack Graham, *Are You Fit For Life*, 50.

<sup>51</sup> Rediger, *Fit to Be a Pastor*, ix.

Susan Saint Sing, Ph.D. is a member of the U.S. World Rowing team and holds a doctorate in sport history and philosophy. Sing contributes this to the discussion, "Ritual is one of the symbols of religion, so are transformation, union, and sacrifice. Sport has all of these, yet I don't want to term it a religion as some authors have; but I will go so far as to say that when we are involved in sport, we involve our body and soul in what can be a religious experience."<sup>52</sup> Oswald also testifies to a multi-dimensional correlation, "For me, optimum health means managing our lives in such a way that we consistently maintain our physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual well-being."<sup>53</sup> Sanford also discusses the interplay between the human body:

Using the body creatively. When most ministering persons say they are exhausted, they mean that they are spiritually exhausted. Of course the feeling of exhaustion may also extend to the body. Physically we may feel languid and lacking in vitality, because the spirit quickens the body just as the body is the physical basis for the life of the spirit. This is worth a further comment. In our culture we are used to thinking of the body as the basis for the life of the personality. When someone dies, the personality also dies (so we think). It is true that our personality, our spiritual life force, cannot be strong if our body is ill or weak, and this is why it is so important that we try to maintain the health of the body (through proper nutrition, among other things). The Bible was wise in referring to the body as the temple of the Spirit, for the two are joined together, at least in this life.<sup>54</sup>

In the chasm of time between Paul and our modern day authors the idea of a correlation between physical fitness and spiritual fitness can be traced back to Clement of Alexandria, "The early Father of the Church, Clement of Alexandria, clearly valued physical and spiritual fitness, but of the two, he taught that spiritual fitness is the most excellent; 'that by it, the soul is made beautiful with the presence of the Holy Spirit and adornments He confers: justice, prudence, fortitude, temperance, love of the good, and

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<sup>52</sup> Susan Saint Sing, *Spirituality of Sport* (Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2004), 23.

<sup>53</sup> Oswald, *Clergy Self-Care*, 6.

<sup>54</sup> Sanford, *Ministry Burnout*, 107.

modesty.”<sup>55</sup> The value of physical fitness is considered by Clement of Alexandria but spiritual fitness is more highly exalted in the same manner that Paul highlights spiritual discipline in 1 Timothy 4:8.

Conversely, it should be noted that a few of the reputable resources researched for this project actually left out physical activity as a necessity for clergy health. Kirk Byron Jones wrote a great book entitled *Self-Care Strategies for Clergy and Other Caregivers* but oddly, he left out physical exercise.<sup>56</sup> Dr. Spaite, who offered valuable insight and advice, leaves out physical exercise but encourages clergy to “Commit yourself to God’s biblical plan for rest and renewal. Do not underestimate how the body impacts the mind and the spirit.”<sup>57</sup> For some reason *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* discourages praying and walking at the same time “The Saint allows, during prayer, any posture of the body that suits the Exercitant, except walking.”<sup>58</sup> However, during the reflection he allows “either sitting or walking.”<sup>59</sup>

Rediger suggests that it is important to emphasize discipline and self-management: “Not to imply that self-centeredness is the key to fitness. Rather the emphasis is intended to counter the lack of disciplined self-management that is common among clergy. It is God’s grace that makes all this work together for what is good for us, for our intimates and constituents, and for God’s purposes.”<sup>60</sup> Rediger suggests a commonality of a lack of self-management among clergy. This project hopes to point out

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<sup>55</sup> Feeney, *Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise*, 115.

<sup>56</sup> Kirk Byron Jones, *Rest in the Storm: Self-Care Strategies for Clergy and Other Caregivers* (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 2001), 1-129.

<sup>57</sup> Spaite, *Time Bomb in the Church*, 149.

<sup>58</sup> Anthony Mottola, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1964), 60.

<sup>59</sup> Mottola, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, 60.

<sup>60</sup> Rediger, *Fit to Be a Pastor*, 93.

the benefits of a reorganization of priorities and habits among clergy. This project desires for clergy to realize the spiritual benefits as a result of good stewardship of one's body.

Sanford mentions that positive change and growth among clergy can be helpful to parishioners: "Once again we see that the resolution of the problems of the ministering person may require resolving certain problems with himself, as well as practical solutions involving change in his outer life. The more growth there is in the ministering person, the more likely it is that he will be able to cope with the difficulties of the ministry without becoming exhausted, and, of course, the more helpful he will be to his parishioners."<sup>61</sup> In her book *Better Body Management* Omartian suggests, "Changing lifelong habits can only be accomplished by first giving the burden to God then totally depending on him every day. We can accomplish nothing lasting ourselves--so don't set yourself up for failure by trying to do it in the flesh."<sup>62</sup>

The thirty-five clergy participants, who will be discussed in the final two chapters, voluntarily agreed to participate in this project. There was amazingly a strong response particularly to the external motivation and opportunity for physical activity. Clergy just need to find something enjoyable and do it. Sanford says, "The two most important things about our choice of physical movement are that the physical activity is interesting to us and that it requires deep breathing. If we are bored with our physical activity, we probably will not do it. If we find it interesting, we will almost certainly pursue it. Veteran joggers report that they never get bored while running (there is always too much

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<sup>61</sup> Sanford, *Ministry Burnout*, 39.

<sup>62</sup> Omartian, *Better Body Management*, 151.

to think about), but other people report that they cannot stand running because it is so monotonous. So we need to choose the kind of physical activity that most interests us.”<sup>63</sup>

Omartian advises, “When setting up your own exercise program, choose some type of aerobic exercise you would be interested in doing for at least 20 to 30 minutes, three to four times a week.”<sup>64</sup> “Dr. Ken Cooper says you must exercise four days per week to maintain healthy muscle tissue. I suggest six days per week, because this allows for the greatest possibility of improvement and still gives you one day of rest.”<sup>65</sup> This project as structured encouraged a slow gradual start of three days a week for thirty minutes a day.

The key to successfully soliciting thirty-five clergy to participate was that they were encouraged to choose what physical activities they wanted to commit to for three months. Getting started properly is the key. Omartian talks about her start. “Some years ago, I decided to make health and fitness a goal, the same way I make internal, spiritual growth a goal.”<sup>66</sup> She tells her readers in *Better Body Management*, “You will need to make changes- but change is easier when we know that it will bring good consequences, and that it will help us achieve the higher purpose for which we were made.”<sup>67</sup> Clergy need to want to become physically healthier. It will take time, it needs to be enjoyable but it also needs to be formed as habitual. Rediger writes, “Timing, as related to fitness, also includes regularity. Though it can contribute to boredom, doing a fitness activity, particularly exercise, at the same time each day and week consistently will help it become a habit. You can vary your routines, but you should stay with a workable schedule.

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<sup>63</sup> Sanford, *Ministry Burnout*, 108.

<sup>64</sup> Omartian, *Better Body Management*, 33.

<sup>65</sup> Heller, *Your Body His Temple*, 134.

<sup>66</sup> Omartian, *Better Body Management*, 13.

<sup>67</sup> Omartian, *Better Body Management*, 17.

Habitual practice reduces the energy and time you will spend on schedule conflicts, mental resistance, and distractions. You simply do the fitness activities because now is the time this is done, and because you know it is worthwhile.”<sup>68</sup>

Oswald is a strong advocate for physical exercise as being essential for clergy health, he writes in *Clergy-Self Care*,

I wish all clergy could experience the means of Grace that physical exercise has been for me. But I know that won't happen. I have learned to be less evangelical about my exercise program, knowing that only a few will actually take the plunge.... For many of you, exercise is pure work and agony. You do it because you know it is good for you. Yet if you had your druthers you would much rather be a couch potato. My wish for you is that you might reach a level of physical conditioning that will enable you to experience some of the exhilarating benefits of a hard physical workout. Yes, there is such a thing as a runner's high. At certain levels of fatigue the brain releases endorphins into the blood stream. These chemicals are the body's own pain relievers and serve to elevate the runner's feelings. When the "high" hits, you get a second wind and you feel you could run forever.<sup>69</sup>

Clergy will not get their second wind in the first week or two of exercise. In fact, the reality is that it will take longer based on age, physical fitness, and frequency.

Joan Borysenko in *Minding the Body, Mending the Mind* says, "Exercise for at least twenty minutes, a minimum of three days a week."<sup>70</sup> Sanford says, "A ministering person enters his profession, not for just a few years, but with the expectation of serving for a life-time. For this reason, he must find a way to work at a pace that can be maintained for a long period of time. He must learn to think like a long-distance runner, who knows he has a long way to run and cannot afford to exhaust himself by running the

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<sup>68</sup> Rediger, *Fit to Be a Pastor*, 87.

<sup>69</sup> Oswald, *Clergy Self-Care*, 145.

<sup>70</sup> Joan Borysenko, *Minding the Body, Mending the Mind* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1987), 207.



first part of the race faster than a pace he can maintain.”<sup>71</sup> Clinebell admonishes people who are just starting out that,

The safest, most low-cost, and effective lifetime aerobic exercise is brisk walking. In the Gospels, it is clear that Jesus did a lot of walking. Again and again, the Gospel writers tell of his walking considerable distances to teach and heal and feed the spiritual hungers of the people. Before Jesus began his ambulatory ministry, he must have had lots of healthy exercise in the carpenter shop and in the course of business and family activities. In our society where we are “wedded to the automobile,” most people must take time to intentionally incorporate regular walking into their wellness programs.... In the last few years, to reduce wear and tear on my knees, I gradually have replaced jogging by fast walking outdoors, four or five days a week for twenty to thirty minutes. I carry light weights in each hand to increase upper body exercise while I walk. My personal experience leads me to affirm physician Andrew Weil’s enthusiastic endorsement of walking. In his book *Spontaneous Healing*, he writes, “Human beings are meant to walk. We are bipedal, upright organisms with bodies designed for locomotion.” So I am going to pare my advice and comments on exercise down to one word: Walk! In my opinion, walking is the most healthful form of physical activity, the one that has the greatest capacity to keep the healing system in good working order and increase the likelihood of spontaneous healing in case of illness.<sup>72</sup>

Feeney says when one is considering a program of exercise, attention should be given to the type of activity, the intensity of activity, and the duration and frequency of activity.<sup>73</sup> He also mentions that, “Exercise can help burn up more calories than you take in and this can help lose excess fat. In most cases, inactivity is the cause of obesity. Harvard’s Dr. Jean Mayer, well known scientist and nutritionist, has stated that he is, “convinced that inactivity is the most important factor explaining the frequency of creeping overweight in modern societies.”<sup>74</sup>

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council stressed that it was the role of parents as the primary educators of their children to start out by being examples of fitness for

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<sup>71</sup> Sanford, *Ministry Burnout*, 18.

<sup>72</sup> Clinebell, *Anchoring Your Well Being*, 85.

<sup>73</sup> Feeney, *Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise*, 97.

<sup>74</sup> Feeney, *Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise*, 93.

their children.<sup>75</sup> Clergy need to be examples for their children and the children in their church as they endeavor to be good stewards of the body, which God has given them, and as they endeavor to live out their call. “Pope John Paul II has remarked that individuals who care for their body and make good use of the body through exercise and sports will benefit from the marked consequences of psychological well being. He has also remarked that we can develop through long hours of exercise and effort the power of concentration and the habit of discipline.”<sup>76</sup> Discipline is important for both physical and spiritual well being.

### Was Jesus Physically Fit?

Graham speculates on the physical fitness of Jesus:

Jesus Himself was no doubt physically fit. He traveled extensively and walked everywhere He went. Anyone who has been to Israel and has seen the rugged terrain from Galilee to Jerusalem can appreciate how physically strong and fit Jesus had to be just to carry out His ministry. Don't think of Jesus as being a pale, emaciated, sanctimonious recluse as He is depicted in some medieval paintings. He was a man's man who carried the cross and the weight of the world on his shoulders.<sup>77</sup>

It does make sense that Jesus was regularly engaged in physical activity during his ministry to the multitudes. Even a retreat to the mountains for prayer and walking on water would take some physical abilities. Feeney mentions eating properly, “It is extremely important to develop a sound game plan as far as nutrition is concerned. It is necessary for establishing and maintaining a solid foundation for our bodies; one that will serve the purpose for which God created them: to be temples of the Holy Spirit. Proper nutrition provides a solid base for developing our physical, emotional, and spiritual well-

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<sup>75</sup> Feeney, *Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise*, 97.

<sup>76</sup> Feeney, *Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise*, 98.

<sup>77</sup> Graham, *Are You Fit For Life*, 51.

being.”<sup>78</sup> Rediger also affirms the reality and says, “Fitness has enormous benefits, fitness is not automatic; it is a choice. Each body is unique. Eating is a critical factor in fitness. Attitude to openness and change is important.”<sup>79</sup>

Graham indicates that Dr. Howard Hendricks of Dallas Theological Seminary used to tell his students, “Overeating is the one acceptable sin in evangelical Christian circles.” This man traveled extensively, and he said the problem was that everywhere he went; people fed him as if it was his last meal. He gained so much weight that it became a real problem until he disciplined himself to get in good shape.<sup>80</sup> Dr. Zuti and Dr. Golding held a classic and interesting study in 1976. The study had three groups: people on a diet program, people on an exercise program, and people doing both. Heller writes, “The lesson in all of these facts is that you will get better results and have a better, healthier, and firmer body if you combine your diet program with a sensible exercise program.”<sup>81</sup>

### Fitness is Good Stewardship

Rediger says fitness is good stewardship and you need to be motivated to transform practices and lifestyles. Lloyd assumes his readers to have a strong personal faith as a resource and guide for a fitness quest. He mentions that Kenneth Cooper in *Faith-Based Fitness* says, “What’s the secret to bridging this gap between merely wishing you were in shape and actually getting into shape? The answer begins with belief--specifically, your deepest personal convictions about what is good and true and

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<sup>78</sup> Fceney, *Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise*, 110.

<sup>79</sup> Rediger, *Fit to Be a Pastor*, 71.

<sup>80</sup> Graham, *Are You Fit For Life*, 54.

<sup>81</sup> Heller, *Your Body His Temple*, 58.

ultimately important about your life.”<sup>82</sup> Rediger says, “Bodies exist in two ways: the first is our actual body, and the second is the mental image we have of our body. One is reality-based, the other is fantasy. It is important to compare constantly your actual body and your fantasy body as you explore bodily fitness.”<sup>83</sup> It is important for clergy to have an accurate assessment of their actual body. It is an effort to regularly engage in physical activity. Susan Saint Sing offers these thoughts:

To strive to push one’s body in a channeled effort, while seeking to dive into the recesses of the soul for fortitude, courage, strength is a difficult place for humans to put themselves into. Calling upon grace, strength is one thing--becoming the grace and strength is something greater still. When we are sacrificing, offering ourselves for the greater good, the outcome, the finish line--we have broken the barrier of fear, gone through the limit of self and embody creaturehood, gratitude, and humility.<sup>84</sup>

One of the most passionate endorsements of the correlation between physical activity and the spiritual life among clergy was without a doubt found in Leroy Lawrence Hamilton’s book *Jogging with God*. In his introduction he shares this perspective:

The joy of running, jogging, and walking is to feel the presence of God and become aware of his creation. Jogging is one way of seeing the whole spectrum of God’s creation. God is a genuine and real companion to the jogger. The companionship of God brings a kind of renewal that will provide great spiritual, physical, and moral strength and a totally new experience to both the soul and the body. Each morning I reserve my prayers for my daily run of four to five miles. During this time I am able to pray, meditate, and talk with the one and only mediator and seek his guidance for me throughout the day. I thank God for being able to run and jog for over fifty-four years.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Rediger, *Fit to Be a Pastor*, 68.

<sup>83</sup> Rediger, *Fit to Be a Pastor*, 67.

<sup>84</sup> Saint Sing, *Spirituality of Sport*, 88.

<sup>85</sup> Hamilton, *Jogging with God*, xii.

Additionally in Leroy Lawrence Hamilton's inspiring conclusion, he demonstrates his persuasive passion that there is a link between the relationship between physical exercise and the spiritual life:

The author has tried to show the difference between jogging with God and jogging for the sake of only physical fitness. Jogging with God is divine, and the other is secular and materialistic. However, I do not condemn jogging, because in any event, jogging is good and beneficial to the body. There is good fellowship and joy in dealing with mankind, for mankind is the crowning point of God's creative arts. However, to jog with God creates a new self, a new being that brings and develops transformation and renewal. In other words, jogging with God lifts one beyond himself unquestionably and will establish a religious foundation that will in the end bring victory to his life of trials, frustrations, disappointments and disaster.<sup>86</sup>

This literature review has been an important step in considering how others have analyzed the correlation between physical exercise and the spiritual life of clergy. These authors and thinkers have offered pertinent insight, reflection, and discussion while evaluating the impact of the pastoral personal discipline of physical activity as a necessity in being a good steward of the body while being faithful to fulfill their pastoral call. Like the theological framework of chapter two the analysis of these books and articles seem to imply that there is not only a link between physical and spiritual disciplines but there is a benefit. However, this needs to be tested, and in the next chapter this thesis project will discuss the actual project, which was designed to test thirty-five clergy participants. Chapter four will explore the impact of the personal discipline of physical activity as a necessity in being a good steward of the body while being faithful to fulfill ones pastoral call by analyzing the project and the data gathered from the thesis project.

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<sup>86</sup> Hamilton, *Jogging with God*, 37.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PROJECT DESIGN AND OUTCOMES**

Having introduced the problem and its setting for this project, established its theological framework, and discussed key authors and writings in the literature review, the researcher will now begin to explain the project design and outcomes.

This chapter of the thesis project is designed to discuss the method and procedure of the analysis of the relationship between physical exercise and the spiritual life of clergy. The researcher will discuss, and illustrate with charts and graphs, how the participants were selected, their demographics, their denomination, their years of ministry service and their gender. This chapter will emphasize how confidentiality and anonymity were maintained. The proceeding paragraphs will also reveal the attrition rate bearing in mind how many clergy participants started and how many successfully completed the “Single Group Project Pre-test / Post-test Research Study” using questionnaires. This chapter will disclose how the instrument of the pre-test and post-test questionnaire was developed and geared for the collection of relevant data. Reflection, discussion, consideration of the results, and the analysis of the data collected by the instruments will conclude this chapter after first dealing with the method and procedure.

#### **The Project Methodology**

The methodology of the research project warranted utilizing a “Single Group Project Pre-test / Post-test Study.” The instruments developed were two questionnaires, which enabled clergy participants to consider the impact of physical exercise on their spiritual lives. The concept was to have a group of clergy consider their physical and

spiritual health before starting an exercise regime and then consider the same questions following a period of disciplined focused exercise. Two questionnaires were developed in consultation with Dr. Bryan Auday, Department of Psychology, Gordon College, Wenham, Massachusetts. Dr. Auday, as a social scientist, offered valuable advice, expertise, and feedback to the researcher. The researcher, while drafting and preparing the pre-test and post-test questionnaires, was careful to align as many pre-test and post-test questions numerically to allow for *T-test* and *Pearson correlations* to test for statistical reliability.

Thirty questions were originally drafted by the researcher to gather participant demographics, physical health, emotional and physical health before a focused exercise regime. The researcher decided to fashion the majority of the questions using the *Likert Scale* so that statistical comparisons could be easily made between participant pre-test and post-test perspectives. The questionnaires were designed to receive both quantitative and qualitative data by providing, in addition to the *Likert Scale*, an opportunity for open ended questions so that the clergy had opportunity to share their subjective thoughts on the impact of physical exercise on their spiritual life and ministry following a rhythm of recess.

The instruments were designed so that individual answers could be looked at in contrast with other respondents. Distinctions and observations could be made connecting individual responses and placing them in statistical graphs and charts for study. Analysis could be prepared by grouping responses and tracking changes in individual and/or group perspectives following post-test completion. The instruments were primarily created to capture first hand perspective of the relationship between physical exercise and the

spiritual life of clergy. The goal was to have a tool, which could measure any change in group perspective of the thesis topic with social scientifically acceptable data.

The researcher had a goal of thirty participants to provide ample responses through the pre-test and post-test questionnaire in the event that some participants would not be able to complete the project. The purpose of this research study was to explore the impact of the personal discipline of physical activity as a necessity in being a good steward of the body while being faithful to fulfill one's pastoral call. This study was designed to commence with a pre-test and conclude with a post-test following three months of clergy exercise, three days a week for thirty minutes. Following revisions, the pre-test questionnaire (see Appendix 1) had thirty-five questions, which would be answered by the clergy participants before starting the exercise regime for three months. The post-test questionnaire (see Appendix 2) had thirty-six questions which would be answered following a three month exercise period that concluded August 31, 2011.

With the authorization of the thesis mentor and Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary Institutional Review Board the official selection process could commence for finding clergy participants. An email invitation request (see Appendix 3) was delivered to over two hundred clergy through four clergy contact networks. They included, *The Moncton Hospital Spiritual and Religious Care Department, The Moncton Area Council of Churches, The Canada Atlantic Church of the Nazarene, The Evangelical Fellowship of Moncton* and few personal invitations to clergy friends. Thirty-six clergy, including four women, responded to the invitation to voluntarily agree to exercise for thirty minutes a day, three times a week for three months starting on June 1, 2011. The clergy participants were informed that taking part in this research study was voluntary and that



there would not be any compensation offered to them as volunteer participants. They had been given the option to choose not to take part at all. If they agreed to participate in this study, they were advised that they could stop participating at any time. If they decided not to take part, or if they stopped participating at any time, their decision would not result in any penalty. They were informed that if they were unable to complete the three month exercise regime only the information that they submitted would be used as germane. Before starting the project, it was explained to the clergy that if only twenty-five participants out of the thirty-five participants completed the project then this would be noted and confidentiality would be maintained.

Records of participation in this research project have been kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. When the volunteer participants received an email invitation via [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) they were asked to give themselves an identification number using their month of birth and their day of birth. This number served as a confidential identification number that only they would know. The researcher hired an independent professional to download the responses from [surveymonkey.com](http://surveymonkey.com) to ensure confidentiality. The participants were ensured that in the event of any report or publication from this study, their identity would not be disclosed. The results in this chapter will only be reported in a summarized manner in such a way that the participants cannot be identified.

The possible risks associated with participating in this research project were divulged to the participants. The participants were urged to consult their doctor before beginning this exercise regime since risks are dependent upon the unique physical condition of each participant. Each participant was urged to choose the type of exercise or combination of exercises, which they desired to do thirty minutes per day, three days a week, for three months.

The potential personal benefits that could occur as a result of participation in this study were also reported to the participants before they started the project. The potential benefits were speculated to be a healthier state of physical fitness. They were also informed that they may enjoy a sense of accomplishment for maintaining or developing a regular rhythm of recess while engaging in ministry. They were notified that they may experience a desire to continue an exercise regime of physical activity after completing this project. It was also expressed to the participants before starting this project that they may also observe a positive impact on their spiritual and emotional health.

Questions were encouraged. The researcher was open to responding to any questions about this research project and if the participants had any further questions about their rights as a participant they were urged to contact the chairperson of the *Institutional Review Board of Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary*.

The data, which was subsequently collected from these survey questionnaires, enabled a comparative analysis between individual participant responses. The questionnaires allowed a *Dependent T-Test* to be executed and *Pre-test and Post-test correlations* to be statistically verified. The analysis will be discussed later in this chapter. Dr. Bryan Auday agreed to serve as the independent data collection agent, therefore, participant confidentiality was maintained and the data was secured and downloaded. The researcher hired this expert in research methodology to utilize his statistical software to generate reports of the responses in usable readable charts. These graphs, charts, frequency tables, paired samples test charts from the *Dependent T-Test (Matched Pairs T-Test)*, and *Pearson correlation statistics*. The Pearson correlation statistics endeavored to find out patterns of response in one question by synchronizing it with another similar question.

If a particular correlation for two questions is statistically significant, then this indicates that the response scores (e.g., poor (1), fair (2), good (3), very good (4), excellent (5)) for one question is related to how subjects responded to a second question. A significant positive correlation means that high scores for one question is likely to result in high scores for the second question. A significant negative (inverse) correlation is where higher scores for one question are more likely to see lower scores for the second one. The goal was to indicate and evaluate questions with a positive correlation. These tests and graphs enabled the researcher to analyze the data collected by the two instruments. The analysis of the results of the data gathered by the two instruments will now be revealed, considered, and an attempt to interpret the responses will be presented when relevant.

### The Clergy Participants

As mentioned thirty-six clergy responded and agreed to participate in the three month project. Of those thirty-six, only thirty-two completed the pre-test and only thirty completed the post-test. However, when it was time to match the pre-test and the post-test data only twenty-six could be properly verified and accurately matched. Therefore, the quantitative statistical data only utilized the twenty-six participants who used the same identification number and email address on both questionnaires.

These twenty-six clergy who successfully completed the survey represented eight denominations. Ten participants were from the Church of the Nazarene, five were from the Wesleyan Church, the Baptist, and the United Church each had three representatives,

the Anglican Church offered two participants and the Pentecostal, the Presbyterian and another church each had one clergy participant who completed this project.

When these twenty-six responded to the statement, "I have been a minister for the following number of years:" Seven were under ten years, eight were between eleven and twenty years of ministry. Six were between twenty-one and thirty years, four were between thirty-one and forty years with one individual who had been a minister for more than forty years. These project demographics represent a wide variety of ministry service and years of experience.

The qualitative data gathered from all respondents, as declared to the participants in the parameters, was available for utilization as deemed appropriate by the researcher as contributing to the thesis subject matter.

The comparative analysis of the results of the questionnaires concerning the impact of physical exercise on the spiritual life among clergy are illustrated in the following pre-test and post-test graphs. Changes in perspective among clergy can be noted by reviewing each quantitative graph. The researcher has highlighted any change in perspective on post-test responses to questions specifically geared to explore the impact of physical exercise on the spiritual life among clergy.

T- Test scores which offer a two tailed non directional hypothesis of .05% or smaller are recognized as statistically significant by social science. In other words if the actual T-score is five percent or less it indicates that there is only a five percent chance that the statistical mean difference could have appeared by random chance. These select questions will consider the actual T- Test Scores and any relevant correlations will also be presented.

## The Quantitative Data

A report will be given in terms of the validity of the statistical data on each question considered. Here are some of the quantitative responses to a select number of questions specifically geared toward the impact of physical exercise on the spiritual life of twenty-six clergy.

When asked question number six, "In general, would you say your physical health is:" The results of a comparative analysis (See Figure 1 & Figure 2) resulted in a reduction in pre-test "poor" by 3.8% on the post-test and pre-test "fair" category decreased by 11.6%. The post-test "very good" category increased by 19.2%. The T-Test Score of .058 indicates that this is not statistically significant. However, by a very small margin of only .008.

The Pearson Correlation indicates that this question is significantly comparable with the responses on Post-Test questions; 15 (.007) & 17 (.001) and Pre-test; 9 (.025), 14 (.002). At first glance it appears significant that after three months of focused exercise the post-test group generally increased by 19.2% in self assessing as "very good." Whereas "Good" remained unchanged on both surveys, one person increased from pre-test "poor" and one person decreased in their perception of their physical health from pre-test "excellent."

The Pearson Correlation indicates that these responses were answered in a similar manner when asked the questions concerning their general spiritual and emotional health, as well as the positive effects physical exercise had on their spiritual disciplines. The T-Test score does not allow us to classify this as statistically significant.

Figure 1: Preq6-In general, your physical health is:

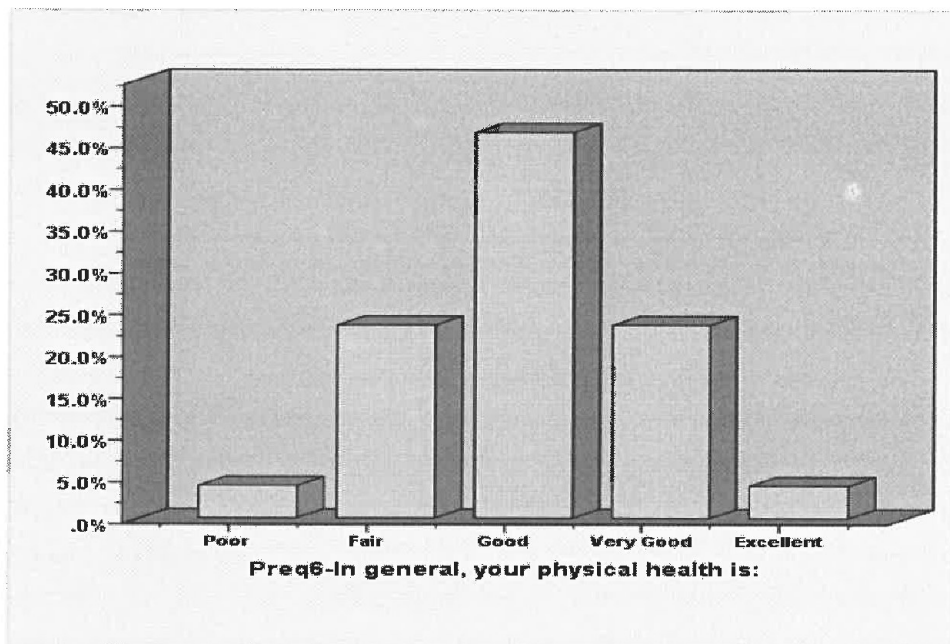
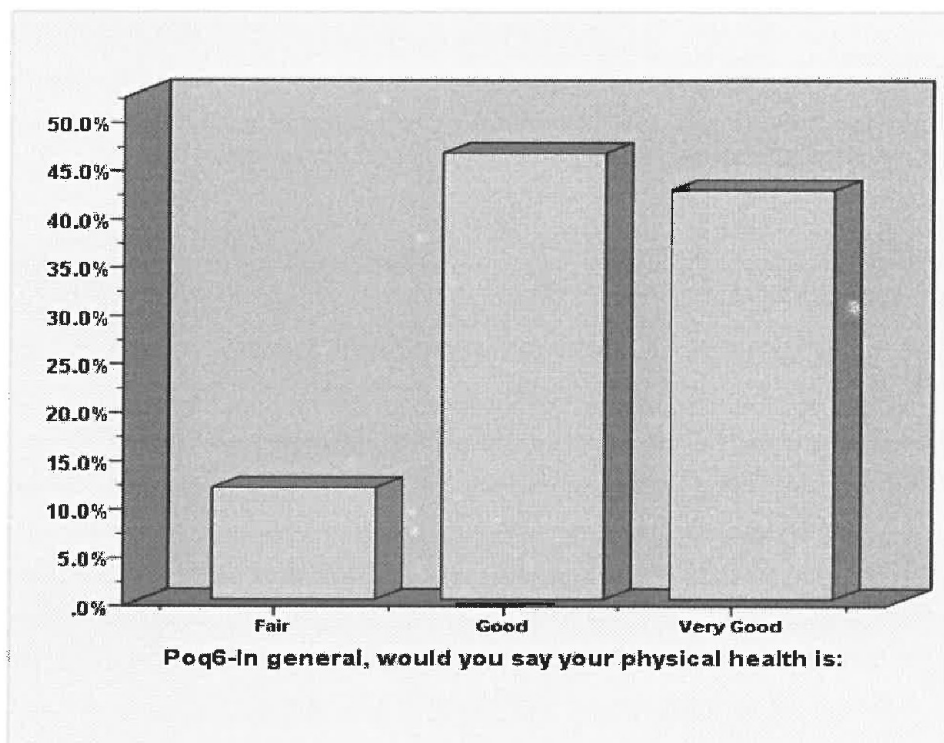


Figure 2: Poq6-In general, would you say your physical health is:



When asked question number seventeen, “To what degree does your physical activity affect your spiritual disciplines (Theological reflection, Bible Study & Prayer)?”

The results of a comparative analysis highlights two interesting categorical results (See Figure 3 & Figure 4) on the response to this question. On the pre-test 7.7% said “not at all” and zero said “not at all” on the post-test. On the pre-test “moderately enhances” was 42.3% and it rose to 61.5% post-test and “extremely enhances” increased by 7.7% on the post-test. The T-Test Score of .025 indicates that this is statistically significant.

The Pearson Correlation indicates that this question is significantly comparable with the responses on Pre-Test questions; 21 (.007), 22 (.002), 23 (.013), 24 (.000), 25 (.008), 28 (.000), 30 (.046) and Post-Test 6 (.001), 19 (.026).

It is interesting that two people changed their pre-test perspective from thinking that physical activity affected their spiritual disciplines “not at all.” The post-test category “moderately enhances” increased by 19.2% which translates to four people and two more people thought that physical activity “extremely enhanced” their spiritual disciplines after three months of exercise.

The Pearson Correlation compares these responses to responses on the questions concerning being more aware of God, wanting to read my Bible and pray more and dealing better with stress.

Pearson also indicates that respondents answered the questions regarding being more useful as a minister, feeling better spiritually, physically and honoring God with their body in a similar fashion.

Figure 3: Preq17-To what degree does your level of physical activity affect your spiritual disciplines?

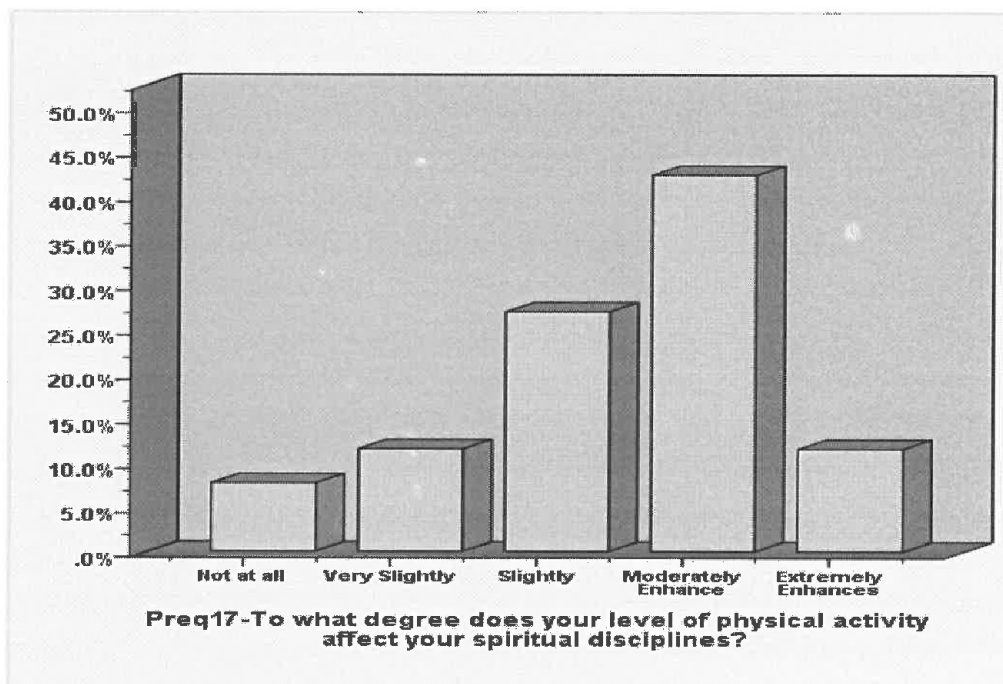
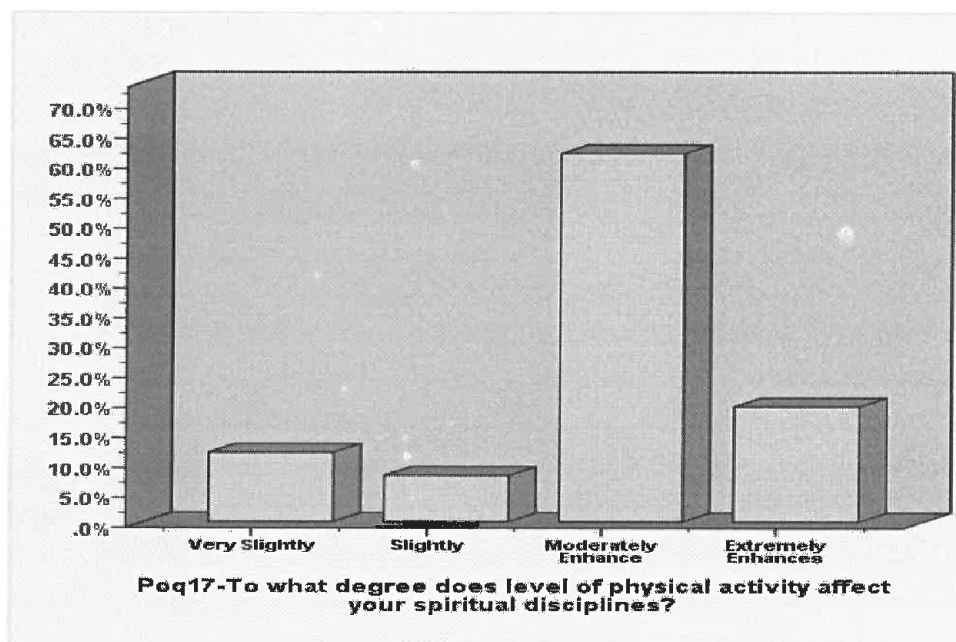


Figure 4: Poq17-To what degree does level of physical activity affect your spiritual disciplines?





When asked question number eighteen, “To what degree does your church support and encourage your physical activity?” The results of a comparative analysis (See Figure 5 & Figure 6) resulted in a reduction from pre-test results indicating 40% of the participants declaring their church supports them “not at all” to only 23.1% saying “not at all” on post-test questionnaire following three months of focused exercise.

The T-Test Score of .179 indicates that this is not statistically significant and the Pearson Correlation indicated that there was nothing significant.

At first glance, it appears that there is an actual increase in church support or perhaps an increase in the clergy participant perspective of their church supporting them in exercise after three months of exercise. However, the T- Test score indicates that the responses to this question are probably not statistically reliable.

Figure 5: Preq18-To what degree does your church support and encourage your physical activity?

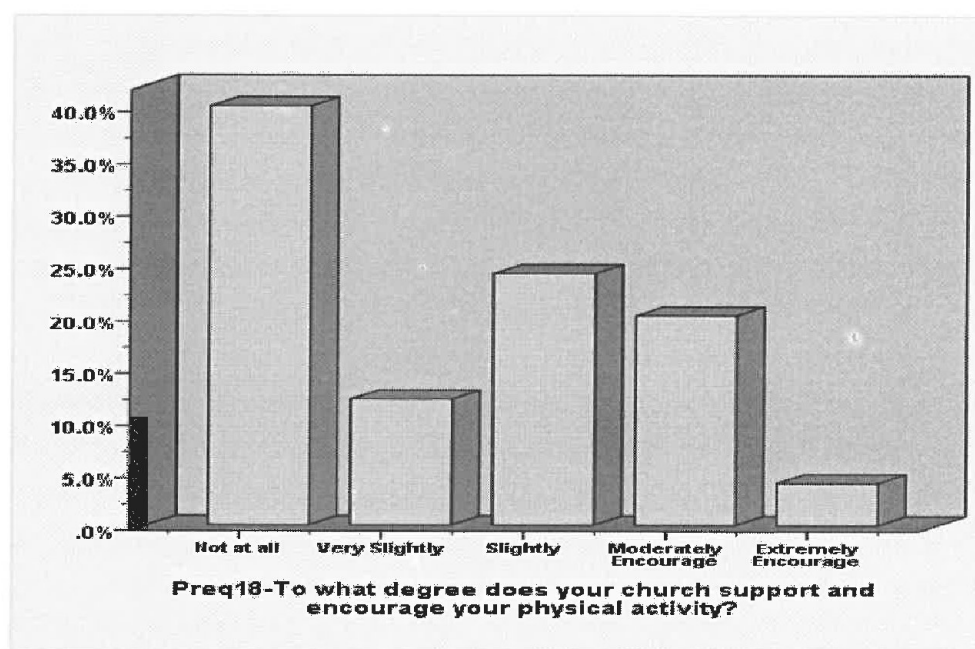
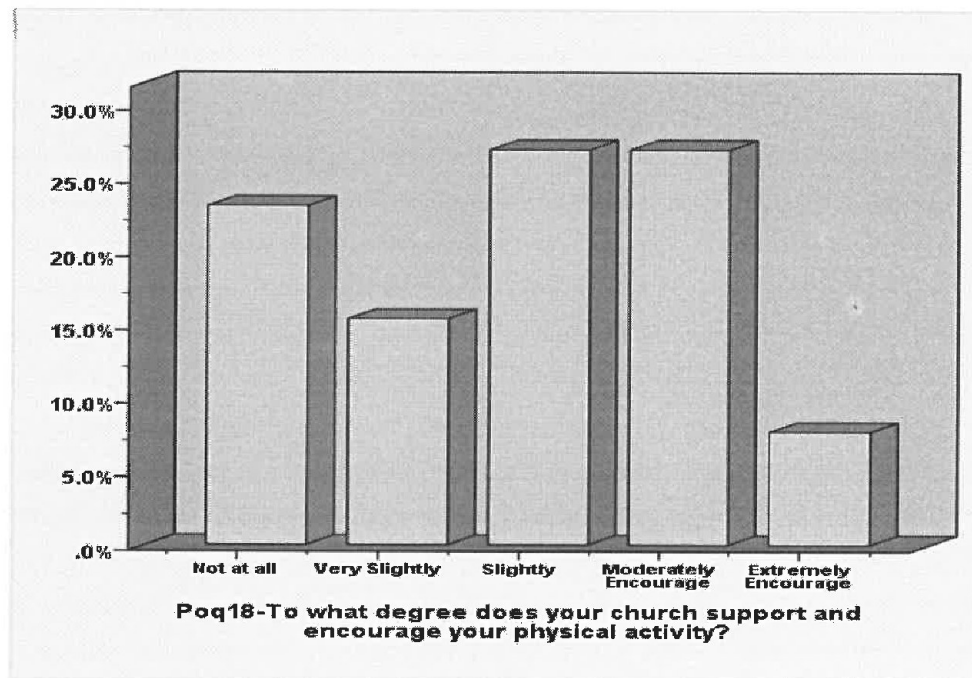


Figure 6: Poq18-To what degree does your church support and encourage your physical activity?



When asked question number twenty-one, “When I exercise, I feel better spiritually.” The results of a comparative analysis (See Figure 7 & Figure 8) resulted in a 10.9% reduction from pre-test “neutral” which was 26.9% to a post-test 16% “neutral” perspective.

The T-Test Score of .603 indicates that this is not statistically significant and the Pearson Correlation also indicates that there is nothing significant.

At first glance, it appears to indicate an increase of 10.9% in the category of “agreeing” and “strongly agreeing” that physical activity makes clergy feel better spiritually. However, the T- Test score indicates that the responses to this question are probably not statistically reliable.

Figure 7: Preq21-When I exercise, I feel better spiritually.

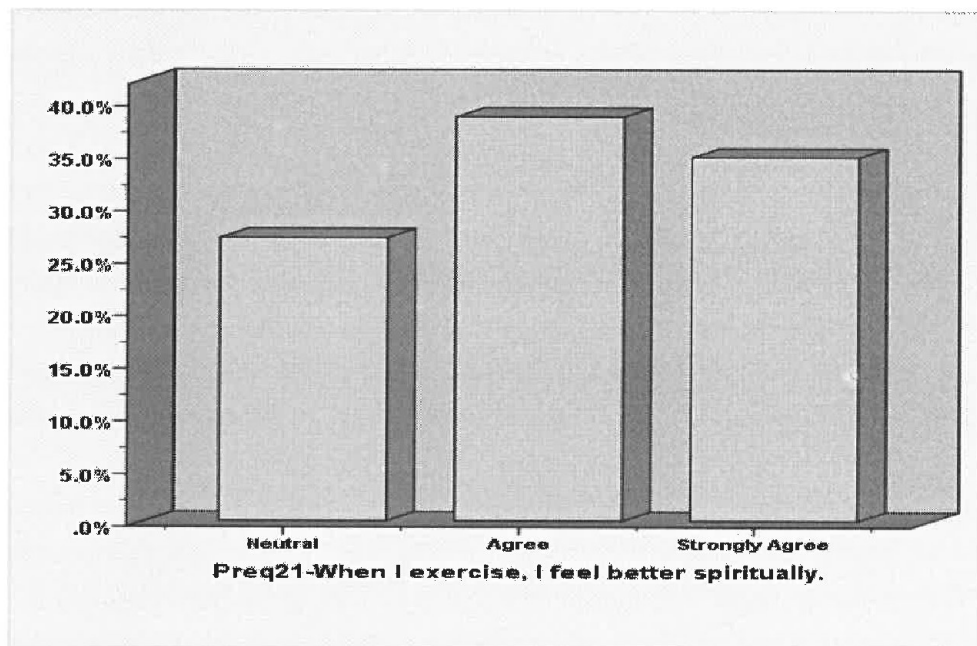
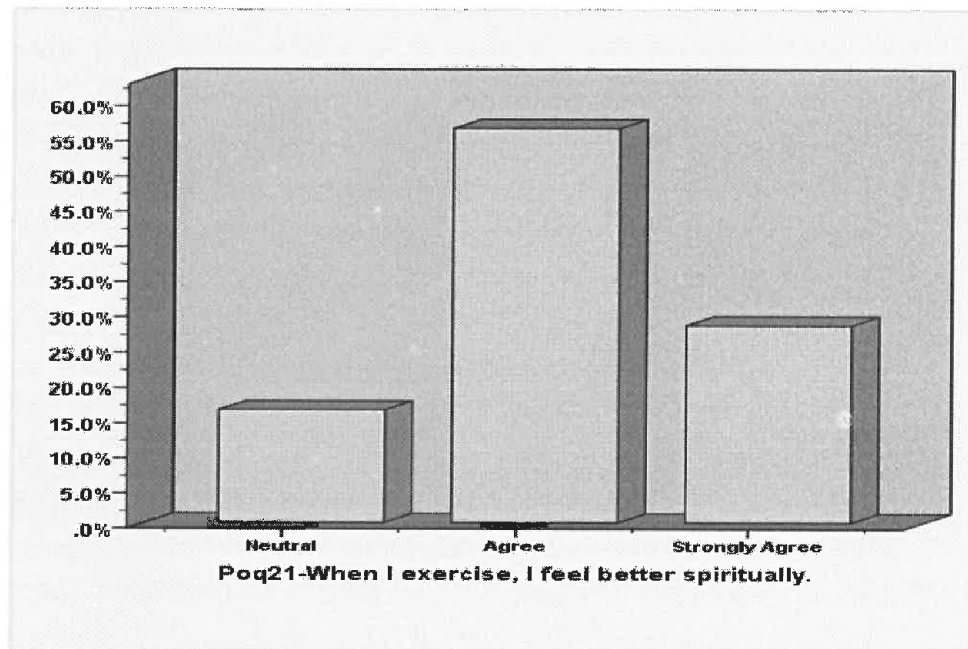


Figure 8: Poq21-When I exercise, I feel better spiritually.



When asked question number twenty-two, “When I exercise, I have a stronger desire to pray.” The results of a comparative analysis (See Figures 9 & Figure 10) resulted in a reduction from pre-test 7.7% “disagree” and 42.3% declaring a “neutral” standpoint pre-test to increasing the post-test “strongly agree” category by 19.3% leaving zero “disagreeing” on the post-test and a reduction by 11.5% in the “neutral” category on the post-test.

The T-Test Score of .001 indicates that this is extremely statistically significant. The Pearson Correlation also indicates that this question is significantly comparable with the responses on Pre-Test questions; 17 (.002), 19 (.001), 20 (.001), and 21 (.000).

There is an increase of “strongly agree” by 19.3% on the post-test. There was also a reduction in pre-test “strongly disagree” and “neutral” by 19.2%. The T- Test Score indicates that this is statistically significant and that there is only a one in one thousandth chance that this statistic occurred by random chance.

The Pearson Correlation closely relates this as statistically significant as linked to other questions which deal with the impact of physical exercise on spiritual disciplines, feeling better physically, emotionally and spiritually.

This question indicates that almost 70% or eighteen of twenty-six clergy participants “agree” or “strongly agree” that physical exercise gives them a stronger desire to pray.

Figure 9: Preq22-When I exercise, I have a stronger desire to pray.

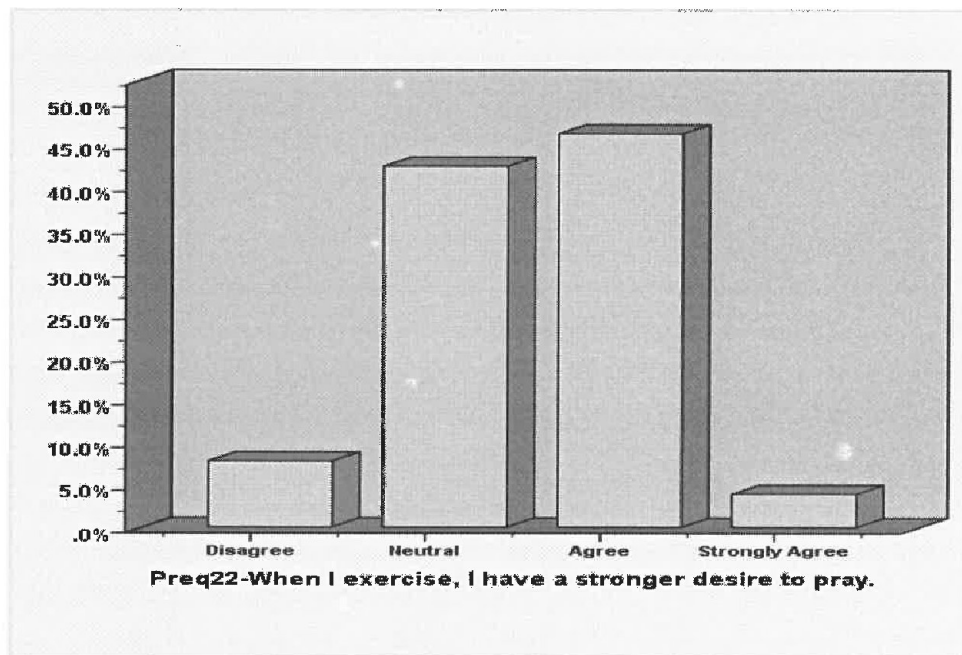
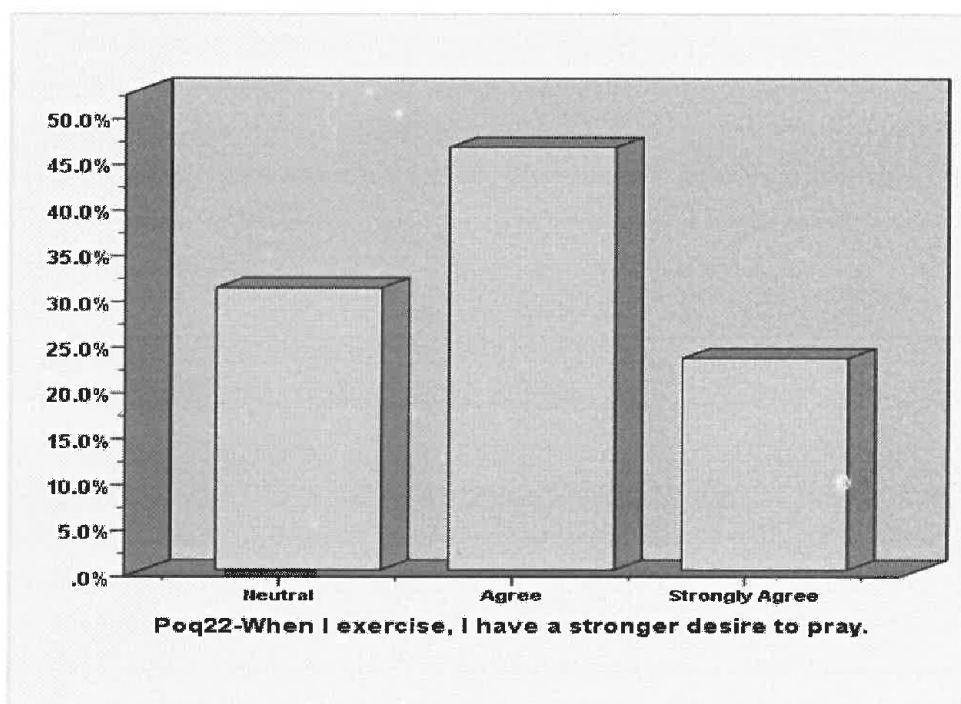


Figure 10: Poq22-When I exercise, I have a stronger desire to pray.



When asked question twenty-three, “When I exercise, I am more aware of God.” The results of a comparative analysis (See Figures 11 & Figure 12) of the categories of “disagree” and “neutral” on the pre-test were reduced by 25.1% on the post-test with the participants increasing their thoughts that they “agree” and “strongly agree” by 25.3% that they are more aware of God when they exercise. There was no change in the “strongly disagree” category remaining at 3.8% on both questionnaires which represents one person. The T-Test Score of .022 indicates that this is statistically significant. The Pearson Correlation also indicates that this question is significantly comparable with the responses on Pre-Test questions; 17 (.013), 22 (.000), 24 (.000), 25 (.005), 26 (.046)

Therefore, it can be surmised that there was a 25.3% increase in the awareness of God through physical exercise according to the 26 clergy participants. The T- Test score verifies the responses as significant. The Pearson Correlation links this with impact on spiritual disciplines, a stronger desire for prayer and Bible reading, feeling better about self, and dealing with stress.

Figure 11: Preq23-When I exercise, I am more aware of God.

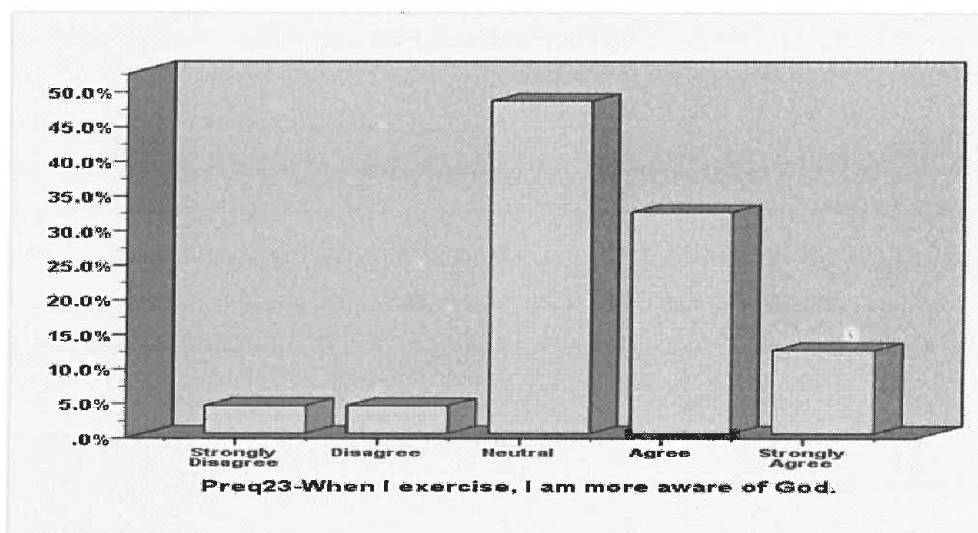
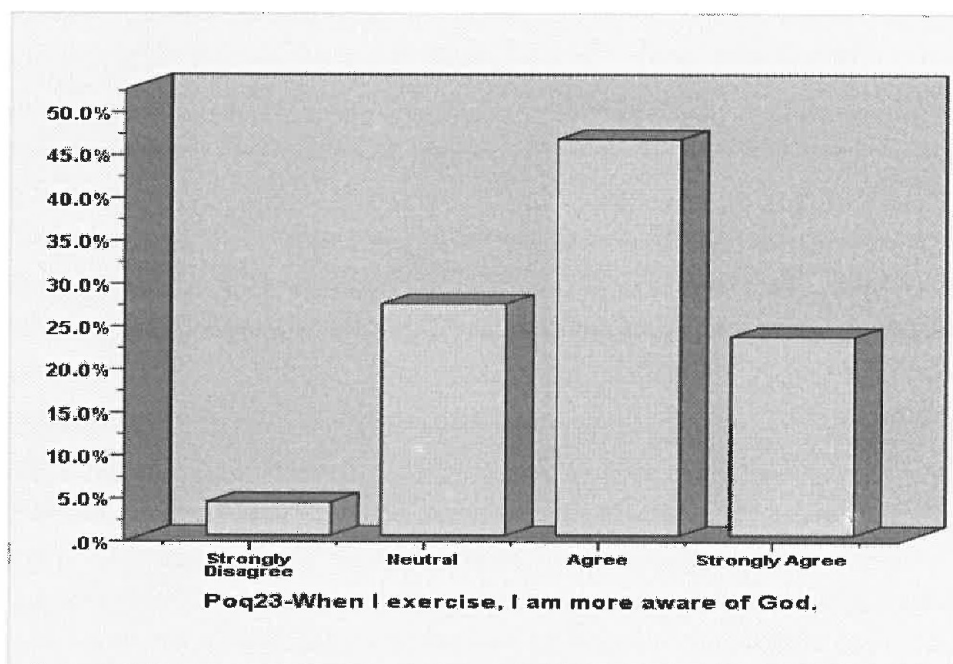


Figure 12: Poq23-When I exercise, I am more aware of God.



When asked question number twenty-four, “When I exercise, I want to read my Bible more.” The results of a comparative analysis (See Figure 13 & Figure 14) show that pre-test “strongly disagree” and “disagree” were reduced by 11.5% on the post-test and “neutral” on the pre-test was reduced by 15.4% on the post test. Post-test “agree” and “strongly agree” increased by 27%. The T-Test Score of .001 indicates this to be extremely statistically significant. The Pearson Correlation demonstrates that this question is significantly comparable with the responses on Pre-Test questions; 17 (.000), 22 (.000), 23 (.000), 25 (.004), 26 (.035). This is an exciting interpretation as it is extremely statistically significant that there was an increased desire by 27% for these clergy to read their Bible more. The Pearson Correlation also linked this statistic with the questions dealing with feeling better about self, dealing with stress as clergy and an

increased desire to pray. The correlations were statistically significant in relation to comparing the effect on spiritual disciplines and an increased awareness of God.

Figure 13: Preq24- When I exercise, I want to read my Bible more.

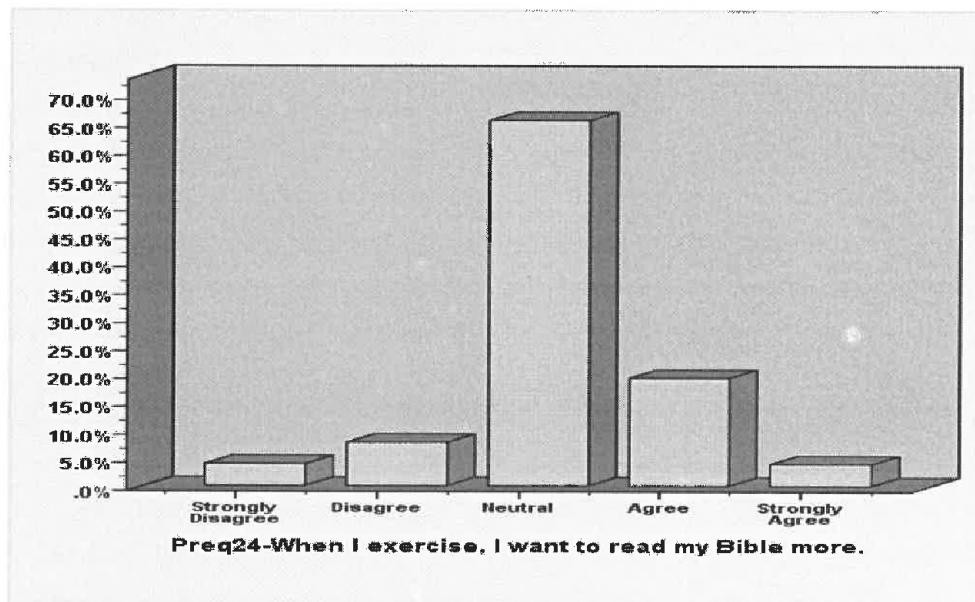
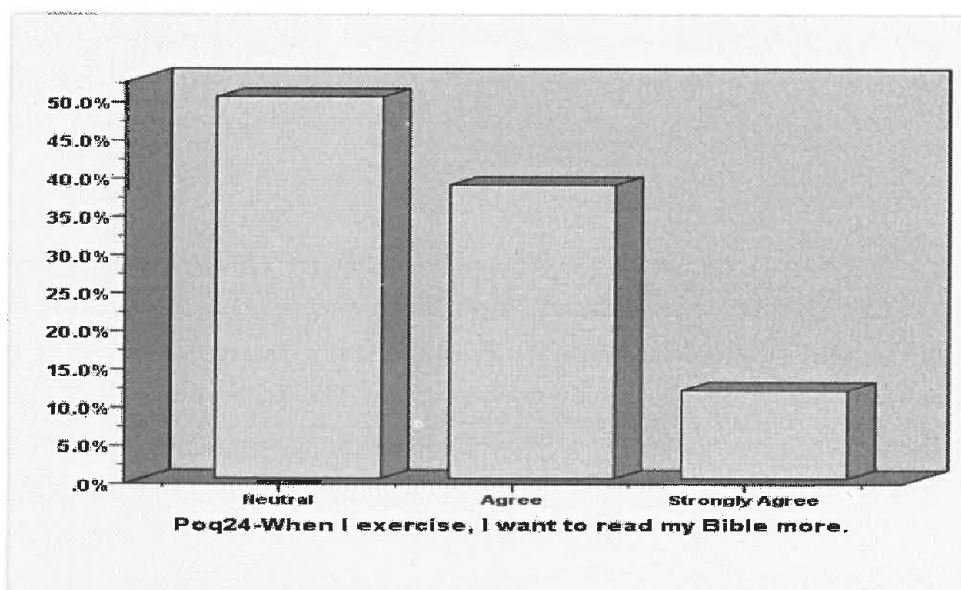


Figure 14: Poq24-When I exercise, I want to read my Bible more.





When asked question number twenty-seven, “When I exercise, I have a clearer mind.” The results of a comparative analysis (See Figures 15 & Figure 16) appears to indicate a 19.2% increase in the category of “strongly agree” on the post-test. However the T-Test Score of .256 indicates that this is not statistically significant. The Pearson Correlation does links the pre-test responses with question 28 (.002).

One would think that exercise gives one a clearer mind according to 20% of these participants but the T- Test points out that this is not reliable and the Pearson Correlation simply indicates that this Single Group thought that ministers are more useful when their minds are clear. Later the qualitative data will provide subjective insight on this topic.

Figure 15: Preq27-When I exercise, I have a clearer mind.

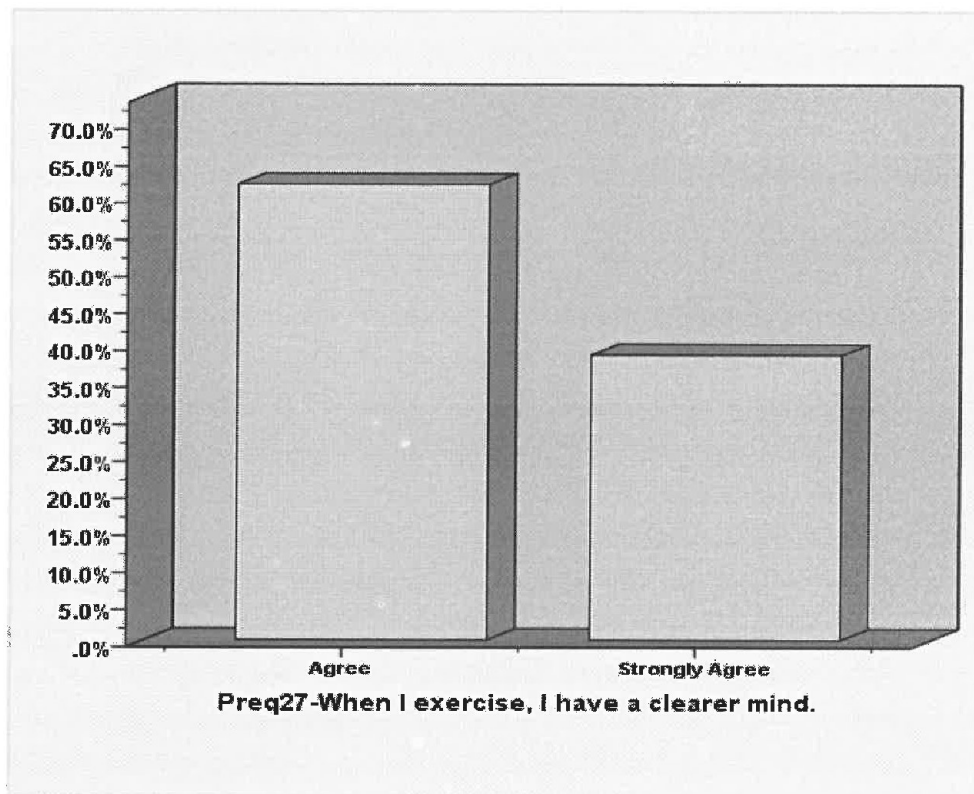
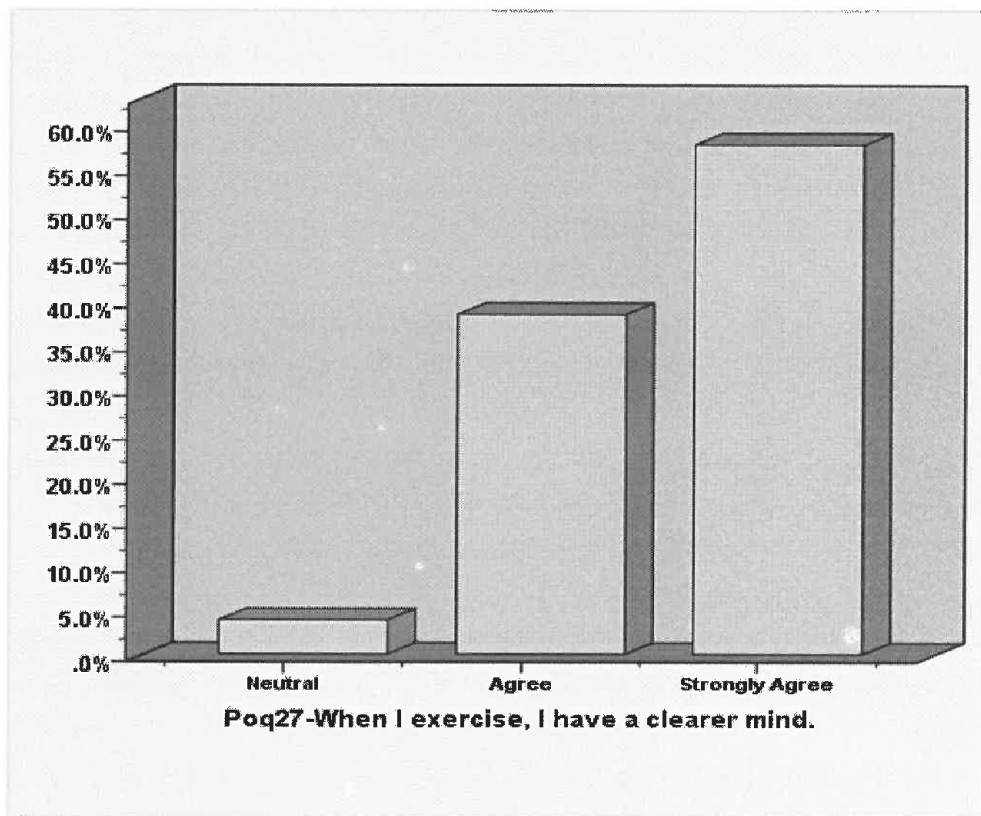


Figure 16: Poq27-When I exercise, I have a clearer mind.



When asked question number twenty-eight, “When I exercise, I am more useful as a minister.” The results of a comparative analysis (See Figure 17 & Figure 18) appears to indicate a shift in all categories by 10.5% and increasing “strongly agree” on the post-test by that margin.

The T-Test Score of .170 indicates that this is not statistically significant and the Pearson Correlation also indicates that there is nothing significant.

The lack of statistical significance dispels the notion that there is a slight increase of 10.5% in usefulness as a physically healthy minister.

Figure 17: Preq28-When I exercise, I am more useful as a minister.

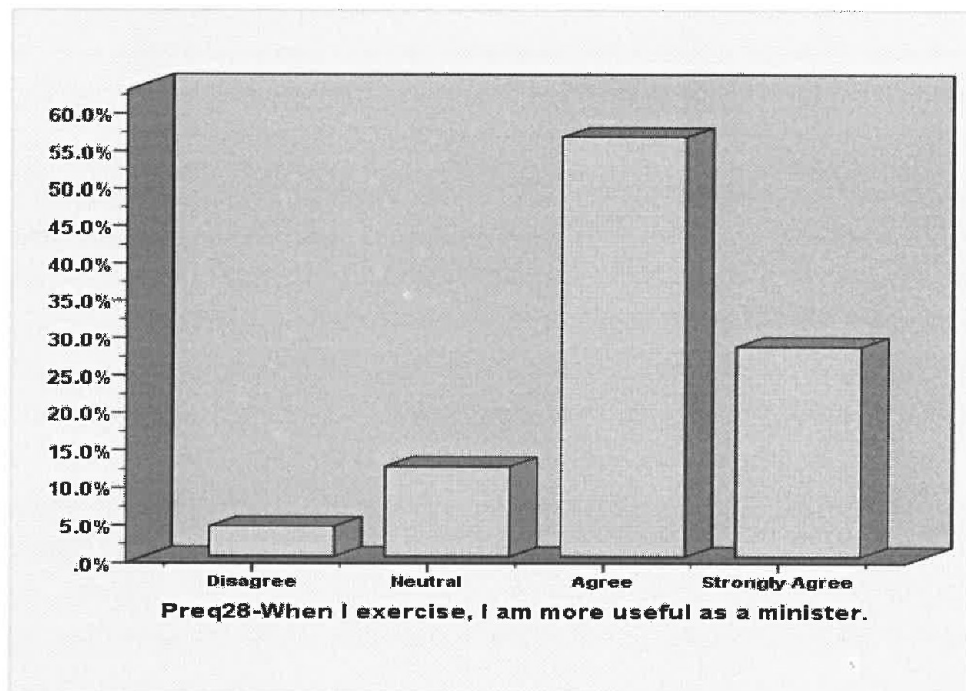
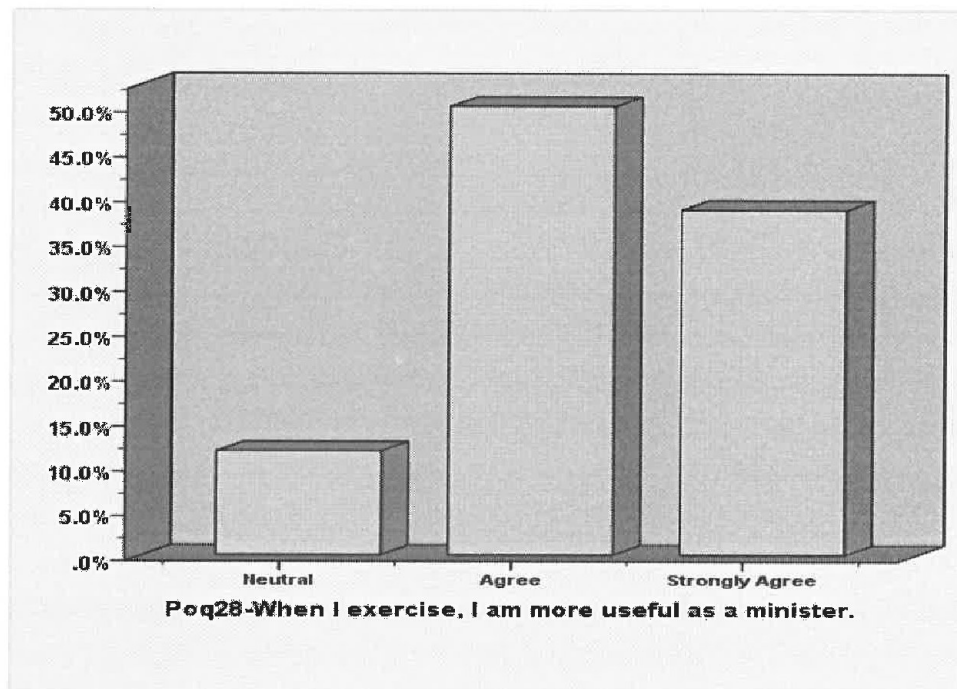


Figure 18: Poq28-When I exercise, I am more useful as a minister.



When asked question number thirty, “When I exercise, I honor God with my body.” The results of a comparative analysis (See Figure 19 & Figure 20) demonstrates an increase in the post-test category of “strongly agree” by 22%. The T-Test Score of .022 indicates that this is statistically significant and the Pearson Correlation indicates that this question is significantly comparable with the responses on Pre-Test questions; 31 (.005), 17 (.046), 27 (.017), and 28 (.000). There was a significant 22% change in perspective after three months of clergy exercise in the area of “strongly agree.” Therefore 22% more of these clergy “strongly agree” that they honor God with their body through physical exercise. Therefore, they are better stewards of their bodies. The T- Test indicates that this is a significant statistic. The Pearson Correlation indicates that the manner in which these responses were offered is closely linked with how respondents indicated that they were good stewards of their bodies. There was also a significant link in responses concerning the effect exercise had on the spiritual disciplines, having a clearer mind and being more useful as a minister.

Figure 19: Preq30-When I exercise, I honor God with my body.

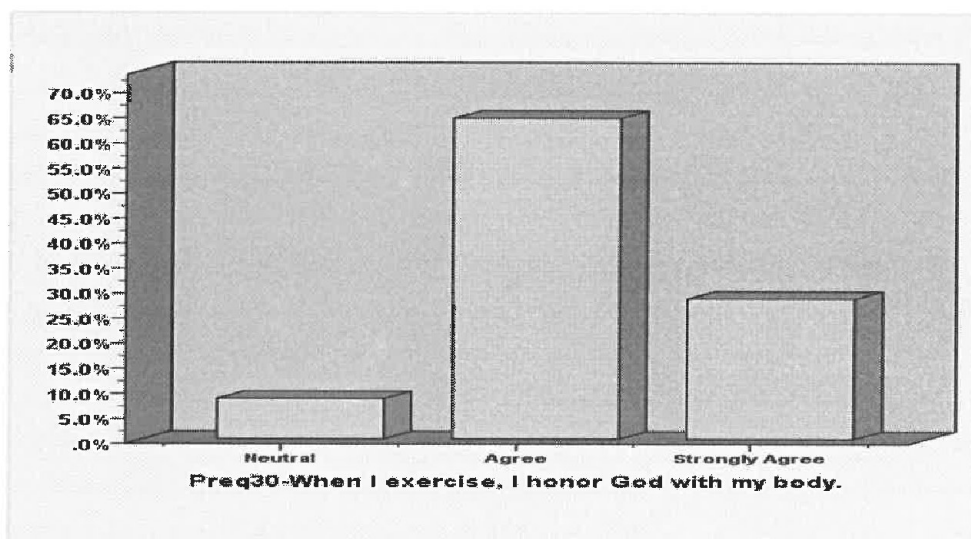
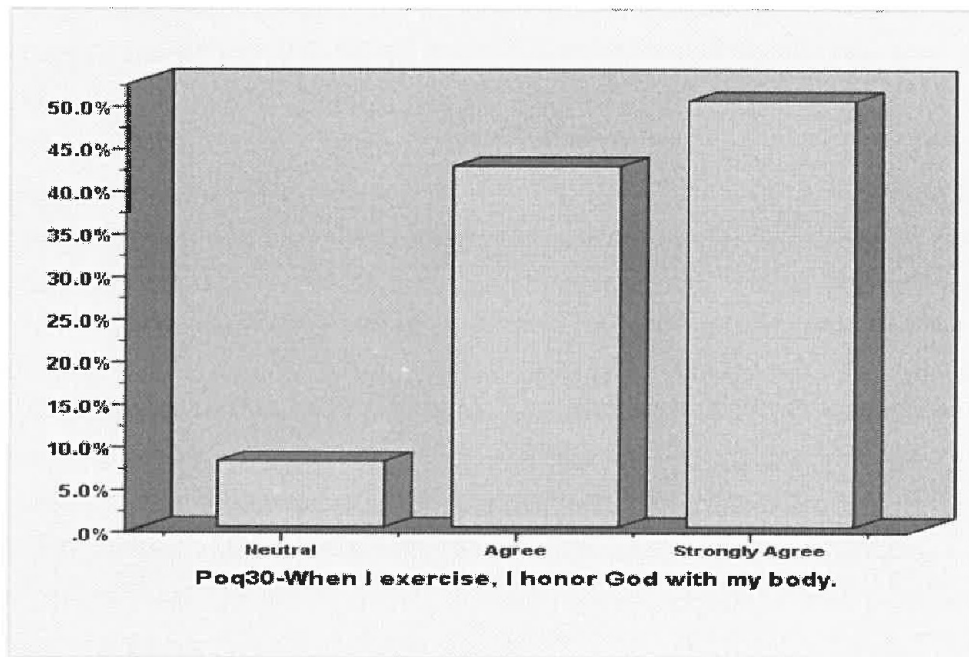


Figure 20: Poq30-When I exercise, I honor God with my body.



### The Qualitative Data

That completes the summary of the results from the quantitative portion of the project. Summary highlights will be incorporated into the conclusions. The qualitative data was very rich in that it allowed the project participants to directly respond to specific questions in their own words.

This chapter will now highlight the results of the qualitative data gathered from some of the clergy participants. When asked question thirty-three, “What impact does physical activity have on enabling you to carry out your Pastoral call?” The results as indicating in a pre-test sampling of clergy responses are indicated in Figure 21.

Figure 21: Preq33-What impact does physical activity have on pastoral call?

There have been times that I know that I feel better, clearer mind, more energy when I exercise. So yes it does help.

6/2/2011 6:55 AM

More energy, more focus, better rest.

6/1/2011 9:14 PM

For me more exercise equals more energy, sounder sleep, better focus on work.

6/1/2011 1:43 PM

none

5/25/2011 12:24 AM

Physical activity would only help to improve my general health and self esteem however I recognize that my sense of responsibility to my vocation would be reason enough to keep working through a time period preset for exercise.

5/19/2011 3:00 PM

Right now, none that I am aware of. Considering that I am in Youth ministry though, I can see it having a huge benefit when it comes to keeping up with the youth.

5/19/2011 11:19 AM

Physical activity causes me to be more alert and in tune with what is happening around me. I am able to focus on what lies before me in the day and dream about vision for the future.

5/16/2011 1:30 PM

I feel that physical activity enhances my pastoral call. Some of my most lucid moments are during my runs. Pray is often done during my exercise.

5/14/2011 9:12 PM

Very little so far as I am aware.

5/13/2011 1:58 PM

The above data would contain a sampling of information collected from the questionnaires of the original thirty-six respondents. Following the three months of physical exercise the same qualitative question was asked to the clergy participants of this Single Group Project Pre-test / Post-test Research Study Participants. The data which will be shared now in Figure 24 is a sampling of all who responded on the Post-test questionnaire to question thirty-three. As declared earlier, the qualitative data is not limited solely to the twenty-six clergy who successfully completed the survey but all data collected.

Figure 22: Poq33-What impact does physical activity have on pastoral call?

Physical fitness helps me to live above the grit and grind of ministry in an institutional context.

9/1/2011 7:02 AM

When I am exercising, I feel better about myself and have good energy for my pastoral responsibilities.

8/29/2011 10:07 AM

Overall better health and energy to do what God has called me to do.

8/23/2011 11:25 AM

1. It encourages good health and energy, which allows me to pursue my responsibilities with greater energy. 2. It builds self-respect and self-confidence in me, which helps me deal with stress, discouragement, and depression more effectively. 3. The discipline that physical exercise demands carries over to my calling. I can better discipline myself to undertake the difficult and distasteful tasks that ministry often calls for in a more consistent way. I find that neglect of the physical makes it easier to neglect and avoid the more unpleasant tasks that come up in the ministry.

8/18/2011 9:41 AM

I feel better and, I'm sure, I look healthier, which is uplifting (so I've been told) to my congregations who see my on Sunday mornings.

8/15/2011 12:17 AM

It helped in all areas and I was able to stay focused and on track 100 percent better!

8/12/2011 11:07 AM

It has a direct positive impact on carrying out my pastoral duties and my call. I feel better in all aspects of my life (socially, physically, spiritually, emotionally) when I am taking care of myself physically that this has a positive impact on all areas of my life. From a pure discipline standpoint, it really helps me. But the secondary positive effects, those already mentioned, it really helps with fulfilling my pastoral call.

8/12/2011 10:21 AM

I was reminded that caring for our bodies is a large blind spot in the Christian community. Initially, one feels a bit of guilt for taking the time to exercise, especially if travelling to and from the gym. But the return is well worth it. On average it took me about 60-90 minutes to go to the gym and then get back to the office [3 times per week], but I gained that much time and more in productivity. I also was able to rise up earlier in the morning, adding even more time to my day.

8/11/2011 11:11 PM

Direct link between physical health, mental health, and spiritual health. The strength experienced from regular exercise carries over into all areas of life including pastoral call. Feelings of vibrancy, strength, resiliency, and flexibility in the physical body directly impact the ability to pastor confidently. I see this now more than ever as my injury and inability to exercise at previous levels has negatively impacted my ministry.

8/11/2011 12:34 AM

I am more aware of timing now. It has helped me to better schedule my day.

8/11/2011 10:55 AM

When asked question thirty-four, “Do you think there is a link between physical disciplines and spiritual discipline (Theological reflection, Bible study, and Prayer) Briefly explain?” The result of a pre-test sampling of clergy responses are recorded in Figure 23.

Figure 23: Preq34-Do you think a link between physical & spiritual disciplines?

Yes, I find when I am more disciplined in one; I am more likely to be disciplined with the other. 6/1/2011 9:14 PM Discipline rubs off. Taking the time to exercise requires planning and discipline. This tends to have an influence on all of my day. 6/1/2011 1:43 PM A healthy body and mind is very important to spiritual well being. Taking care of our bodies is a spiritual principle as well reading, praying, studying, etc. 5/20/2011 8:10 AM I'm not sure. I hope the program this summer will offer some insight. 5/19/2011 12:26 AM I do. The Scripture tells us that spiritual study is more beneficial than physical exercise, i.e. Paul's letter to Timothy. God has created us as physical beings with guidance to be good stewards of our bodies. I believe there is a direct correlation between the physical, mental, and spiritual health of a person. One aspect of our being cannot be in total health if others are not in health. 5/14/2011 9:12 PM Don't know, but I think there should be some link. 5/13/2011 9:50 PM Absolutely. For me there is a direct link. Both require discipline, regular discipline. For me when I am more disciplined in either area (devotional life or exercise) it has a direct positive effect on each other. 5/13/2011 9:49 PM Paul's image of the athlete points to a link; I believe in the link; I have trouble putting it into practice. 5/13/2011 1:58 PM Yes, most definitely the discipline that it takes to exercise can lead to greater discipline in spiritual practices. Also the denial of self and containing ones desires leads to a greater connectivity to God. 5/12/2011 8:31 PM I have never really stopped to think about it. I am a big believer in exercise and overall health, but I never thought about the impact on spiritual health. I would imagine there is and I look forward to reflecting on it. 5/12/2011 5:30 PM
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Following three months of exercise when asked the same question on the Post-test some of the clergy responded as recorded in Figure 24.

Figure 24: Poq34-Do you think a link between physical & spiritual disciplines?

Yes.... I think we need to seek a holistic balance and physical exercise is an essential component. When one aspect suffers all other areas will suffer.

9/7/2011 10:03 AM

Sure. I think the keyword is discipline. If a person shows discipline in one area of their life, it makes it easier to transfer to other areas.

9/6/2011 8:44 PM

Yes, to a degree. Because I typically work out alone, I am with my thoughts, which often turn to God. I am also, more in tune with my body, and what goes into my body.

9/6/2011 7:40 PM

Yes... I think that the physical impacts every other area of our lives and deserves attention. -Both disciplines are organic. For one to work, both have to be healthy.

8/31/2011 9:52 PM

Yes... Regular exercise provided an increase in personal energy levels, which translated into greater physical and spiritual stamina...We are integrated beings it all connects

8/30/2011 12:04 AM

We are integrated beings it all connects

8/29/2011 5:20 PM

Yes. When the physical discipline is followed, I am more aware of the need for spiritual reflection.

8/29/2011 2:06 PM

Yes I do. More energy and more clarity of thought helps keep me focused. When I have more energy, it really does motivate me to be more on top of things spiritually.

8/29/2011 1:27 PM

It is a total life commitment. Honoring God in all areas of my life. Part of being disciplined as a Christ follower.

8/23/2011 11:25 AM

Yes, there is a link. I would weigh in stronger for the need of the spiritual disciplines over against the priority of physical exercise. They complement each other for sure. Perhaps my commitment over the years has been for the spiritual and I see the value and the importance of that.

8/22/2011 9:02 AMs

Yes, being diligent at one encourages diligence in the other.

When asked question number thirty-five, “To what degree, if any, do you think physical activity will provide a benefit to you as a pastor?” The result of a pre-test sampling of clergy responses is recorded in Figure 25.

Figure 25: Preq35-To what degree do you think physical activity benefits pastors?

More energy, better health, better moods, lose weight. I am 70 - 80 pounds overweight.  
6/1/2011 9:14 PM

I believe more exercise will help my endurance and concentration. Obviously, it will help to improve my overall respiratory and cardiovascular condition  
6/1/2011 1:43 PM

I am not quite sure on this one yet. I am sure that having more energy would help as a pastor, but I am waiting to see how this works out. I have never drawn the two together.  
6/1/2011 12:27 AM

I am overweight, to any activity that helps me to lose this weight and have a better image and presence will help and benefit my ministry.  
5/19/2011 10:37 AM

Not sure  
5/19/2011 10:35 AM

This study will help me be more disciplined in my physical exercise, which will directly affect, in a positive manner, my spiritual disciplines.  
5/13/2011 9:49 PM

Helps get me out of 'ministry mode'. Sometimes, the mental benefits are at least equal to, if not greater than, the physical benefits.  
5/13/2011 3:18 PM

My effectiveness in EVERY area of my ministry is affected by my physical fitness  
5/13/2011 12:07 AM

It will help keep mind, body fresh, and having energy. It prevents the growth of sluggishness and neglect. It keeps alive the awareness of life and the world in which we live. A pastor should enjoy all legitimate aspects of life in order to be a well rounded person and leader. It is difficult to provide leadership when you are sickly and weak.  
5/13/2011 11:45 AM

Being physically and spiritually well enables me to minister  
5/13/2011 10:29 AM

Physical activity helps me in the following ways as a pastor: 1) Relieves stress - a healthy outlet 2) Interaction with a different community outside of church life 3) Friendship and companionship from teammates adds to my overall happiness 4) I love to be competitive so it is a healthy arena for competition. 5) Will give me more energy and enthusiasm about my ministry. 5/12/2011 5:30 PM

Following three months of exercise when asked the same question some of the clergy responded as follows on the post-test:

Figure 26: Poq35-To what degree do you think physical activity benefits pastors?

Not a great deal mostly because of the summer vacation and time of the year. But I expect to maintain what I am doing and so for the fall it will have a great impact in health and well-being.

9/7/2011 10:03 AM

Because I didn't do so well, it hasn't affected it.

9/6/2011 8:44 PM

No real change because it has been a long term thing with me.

9/1/2011 7:02 AM

Since the main change came in 2010, nothing in particular had changed. The goal though was to maintain the increased energy gained then.

8/31/2011 9:52 PM

Nil

8/29/2011 5:20 PM

When I was physically more active, my attitude towards ministry was more focused and positive.

8/29/2011 2:06 PM

I feel more in control of my own life thus that spills over to my ministry.

8/29/2011 1:27 PM

The physical activity has helped me be more alert and a better balance between body, mind, and spirit.

8/22/2011 9:02 AM

I feel less stressed over things not done and my mind somehow feels better equipped to 'triage' various jobs that must be done (i.e. balancing various "ministries of presence" with administration).

8/15/2011 12:17 AM

No real change - just more cognitive that being engaged in physical activity helps me sleep better at night!

8/15/2011 10:38 AM

I can't think of much right now.

8/12/2011 11:07 AM

It is about the same...

8/12/2011 8:54 AM

As mentioned, it has increased my alertness, enthusiasm, and productivity.

8/11/2011 11:11 PM

The most important or perhaps direct qualitative question was asked solely on the post- test which gave the clergy participants the opportunity to significantly speak to the thesis project topic specifically and subjectively. Here is a sampling of the responses:

The final question to be considered was only asked on the post-test. When asked question number one, "Please comment on the impact of physical exercise on your spiritual life during the past three months." The results are revealed in Figure 27.

Figure 27: Poq1-Comment on the impact of Physical Exercise on your spiritual life.

Always frames my day better and directs my thoughts toward "higher" things.

9/1/2011 6:56 AM

The past months have been up and down due to the move. I have been conscience of a spiritual dullness when I have not been exercising.

8/31/2011 9:41 PM

Neutral

8/29/2011 5:17 PM

I did not notice any significant change except to say I was emotionally better prepared to minister to the congregation I serve.

8/29/2011 1:59 PM

Greater exercise causes me to have more energy, to think more clearly and more deeply, and gives me an opportunity to pull away from the hustle and bustle of regular life similar to my daily prayer time.

8/30/2011 11:45 AM

The impact that physical exercise had on my life was hard to exactly measure but here are few things that I think it helped:

1) Health - I was healthier this summer and had more energy. This lead to overall well being included paying more attention to my spiritual life. Most likely my healthiest summer ever.

2) Energy and Enthusiasm – I really looked forward to my team sport activities (baseball) and this kept me motivated to do more during the day.

3) Evangelism - Several of the players discovered I was a member of the clergy and this lead to some great conversations that we initiated by them. Some of them even wanted to start coming to the Church in the Fall. Overall, the more structured physical exercise lead to a renewed energy, less stress a great sense of spiritual well-being, and overall sense of balance and wholeness.

9/7/2011 9:56 AM

By feeling alive and renewed physically, I have had more vitality spiritually. More zest, desire, and hunger for God.

8/23/2011 11:18 AM

Definitely, there is a beneficial co-relation between physical exercise and my spiritual life. In March of this year, I began a spiritual exercise of getting up earlier to spend if possible two hours in prayer and devotions. I have noticed that when I took time for exercise that I had a greater energy level. Also I noticed that my concentration was far, far better. Mind you, I also noticed that I cannot burn the candle at both ends and expect to get up early and be alert. After doing physical exercise such as going for a 26 km bike ride last evening I was able to get up at 4:00 be alert and productive. Also I have found that I need to take the step to doing physical exercise because often the incentive is not that strong. This survey has provided an ongoing, for at least the three months anyway, incentive to follow through on this. There were times in the beginning that more than three days went by before I got going. Yes, I will want to continue this discipline of doing physical exercise as it does have definite benefits.

8/22/2011 8:45 AM

I really felt like I have a clearer perspective and wisdom to make Godly decisions after some time exercising.

8/19/2011 2:28 PM

1. I can see participation in physical exercise as part of the over-all care of myself and life. It is hard to conceive of myself as a good steward while I neglect my physical well being.
2. The discipline required to participate in physical exercise is an important part of the over-all disciplines of life. I find if I cannot discipline myself physically then I cannot discipline myself consistently in spiritual disciplines such as prayer, devotions etc. The attitude and atmosphere that is created when I neglect my exercise spills over into neglect and sluggishness in the spiritual life.
3. Physical exercise keeps me fresh and in good energy. I cannot fulfill my responsibilities to the best of my abilities if I am sluggish or lazy physically. When I exercise, I find I am much more alert and aware in my spiritual life. And much more capable of giving attention to spiritual things.
4. Neglect of the physical creates in me a sense of guilt and dissatisfaction with myself, which influences and discourages my self confidence as I pursue the spiritual life.

8/18/2011 9:17 AM

Positive- helped clear my mind from various stresses and built up frustrations enabled me to focus on my own spiritual disciplines

8/16/2011 1:01 PM

I have found that keeping more active has helped me to be more engaged in doing the work of ministry. I have had more energy and stamina. Some of the times of physical activity (walking, etc.) became opportunities to engage in spiritual disciplines (prayer, meditation, etc.)

8/15/2011 10:21 AM

I noticed as I stayed in my exercise routine that I had more energy and was able to get up earlier to spend time with God in prayer. This helped me to stay focused and to keep my wits about me in my time of transition. It was great to be able to sweat and pray at the same time. My workouts became worship times as I prayed and thanked God for everything.

8/12/2011 11:02 AM

When I started the exercise regime in the summer, I was already exercising to some degree. There were times during the summer that I had to exercise because I knew I was involved in this study and it was during those times that I had to exercise, that is-- the discipline of exercise, that really helped my spiritual life as well. The discipline of exercise encouraged my spiritual life, including the discipline of personal devotions.

8/12/2011 9:49 AM

It has allowed me to have greater focus and patience in my life. I have found it has enabled me to concentrate better during my prayer time.

8/12/2011 8:48 AM

The daily 5 km walks along a wooded trail quiets my mind and restores my soul. The walk gives me time to think about the day ahead; it gives me more energy for the emotional side of my work.

8/11/2011 1:18 PM

In taking the time for regular exercise, I use that time for prayer, meditation, and reflection. It has been a time of spiritual refreshment.

8/11/2011 12:42 AM

The first week of June I was diagnosed with a bulging disc in L-5. My exercise routine normally includes swimming, biking, and running. Due to the injury, I have been able to bike only with a lot more stretching than previously. Since my normal exercise routine has been "interrupted", I have noticed an increased level of stress in my life. Running was the most relaxing time I experienced prior to the injury. Since this effort has been virtually eliminated through June, July, and August, I have noted a greater level of melancholy. My spiritual life has been negatively impacted by decreased exercise due to the injury.

8/11/2011 12:24 AM

Certainly, the clarity of mind has enhanced my spiritual life-by being more aware of my surroundings, I feel closer to my Creator

8/11/2011 11:25 AM

I would say that physical exercise stimulates my energy level and invigorates me in my personal discipline. Part of my walk with God is discipline and as I exercise, discipline seems to follow in every area of my life. If I am lazy about my health, I am lazy about my spiritual life too. As I exercised physically over these last 3 months, I also had a healthier walk with God in my spiritual life.

8/11/2011 11:01 AM

I like to walk/jog. In fact, my favorite place to do so is through the trails of our local park. I often walk/jog alone, or with the dog. I find that in the stillness of the forests, when there nobody around, I feel the Spirit. I have worship songs on my MP3, and I have thought about seeing if I can upload Scripture on to it as well. Overall, the experience has left me longing for more walks as well as more of Him! 8/11/2011 10:48

## Summary Analysis of Data

Finally, what does all this mean? The purpose of this thesis project was to analyze the relationship between physical exercise and the spiritual life among clergy as they endeavor to be good stewards of their bodies. It is interesting to note the social scientific significance of five of the quantitative questions dealing specifically with the impact of physical exercise on clergy spiritually.

When asked (17) “To what degree does your physical activity affect your spiritual disciplines (Theological reflection, Bible Study & Prayer)?” Twenty-one clergy out of twenty-six indicated that physical activity moderately enhanced (16 people) or extremely enhanced (5 people) their spiritual disciplines. This is 80.7% of the clergy participants, after three months of exercise, indicated that their theological reflection, bible study, and prayer were enhanced by physical exercise.

When asked (22) “When I exercise, I have a stronger desire to pray.” The response to this question indicates that almost 70% or eighteen of twenty-six clergy participants “agree” or “strongly agree” that physical exercise gives them a stronger desire to pray.

When asked (23) “When I exercise, I am more aware of God,” after three months of exercise, three days a week for thirty minutes eighteen out of twenty-six clergy agree or strongly agree that they are more aware of God. In correlation to the pre-test, it can be surmised that there was a 25.3% increase in the awareness of God through physical exercise according to the twenty-six clergy participants.

When asked (24) “When I exercise, I want to read my Bible more,” it is extremely statistically significant that there was an increased desire by 27% for these clergy to read

their Bible more after three months of exercise. However, the group was evenly split with thirteen clergy agreeing in some form and thirteen clergy remaining neutral on the idea that exercise increases the desire to read the Bible.

When asked (30) “When I exercise, I honor God with my body,” twenty-four out of twenty-six clergy participants (92.3%) agree or strongly agree that when they exercise they honor God with their body. In fact, 22%, more of these clergy “strongly agree” that they honor God with their body through physical exercise and therefore they are better stewards of their bodies following three months of exercise.

The T-Test indicates that these five questions are statistically significant. There appears to be social scientific support that these five responses shared above imply and indicate that clergy physical exercise did have a positive effect on their spiritual disciplines, prayer, awareness of God, bible study and honoring God with their bodies as a good steward. This indicates that it is important for clergy to develop a regular rhythm of recess.

Overall, the results appear to indicate in both the qualitative and the quantitative data that physical exercise among these twenty-six clergy has had a positive impact on their spiritual lives and it has enhanced their ability to be good stewards of their bodies. This chapter, based on the responses, examined and observed changes in physical, spiritual, and emotional health. This thesis project suspected that there would be measurable benefits of physical exercise among the thirty participating clergy. This project assumed that physical activity among clergy would have a positive impact on the entire life of the clergyperson. Chapter one speculated that the spiritual disciplines of the clergyperson would improve following three months of exercise.



The purpose of this research study was to explore the impact of the personal discipline of physical activity as a necessity in being a good steward of the body while being faithful to fulfill one's pastoral call. In chapter one this thesis considered the problem of clergy physical inactivity and the negative impact of that lifestyle on clergy. In chapter two, this thesis explored the discipline of physical activity as a necessity in being a good steward of the body while being faithful to fulfill one's pastoral call by analyzing the theological framework of a select number of Pauline scriptures which dealt with physical and spiritual terminology. In chapter three, the issue was analyzed by examining what other thinkers have written concerning the topic of clergy physical and spiritual health. In chapter four, the responses of the twenty-six clergy participants have been analyzed and it is becoming clearer that physical activity does have an effect on other areas of one's life. Reason alone purports that a physically healthy clergyperson would be more apt to experience longevity in ministry and a fulfillment of their call.

The usable data from this project has indicated that, among these twenty-six clergy most of the group thinks that there is a relationship between physical exercise and the spiritual life of clergy. Physical exercise has positively enhanced the spiritual life and ministry of some of these participants and has enabled them to be good stewards of their bodies as they endeavor to fulfill their pastoral call. In chapter five, this thesis project will discuss the information gleaned from the project and analyze the entire thesis project. There will be an opportunity to consider and describe any outcomes and new insights discovered. The project will conclude with an evaluation of how one might make changes to any future projects in terms of things, which could or should be done differently based on certain variables that emerged as a result of the thesis project.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY AND EVALUATION**

Having introduced the problem and its setting for this thesis-project, established its theological framework, discussed key authors and publications in the literature review, and explained the project design and outcomes, the thesis project will now conclude with a presentation of the summary and evaluation.

Chapter one described the problem and the setting which required analysis. In the subsequent chapters, this thesis project analyzed the correlation between physical exercise and the spiritual life of clergy theologically and based on supporting literature. This thesis project was designed to gain perspective and insight from live human participants as described and summarized in the preceding chapter. Chapter four presented both the project recipe and the project results with interpretations. In this concluding thesis chapter, the researcher will utilize the information gleaned from the project and evaluate the entire thesis project highlighting new results when supportive. The summary, outcomes, and new insights will revolve around this projects attempt at analyzing the relationship between physical exercise and the spiritual life of clergy.

This chapter will start with an exploration of outcomes including benefits and supplemental germane results of this thesis project. The proposed possible uses for this thesis project will be discussed and options for impacting the church will be presented. Alternative approaches will be considered for future analysis of the subject including suggestions for different methods of topical examination. The lessons that were learned will provide alternative suggestions for future studies. The short-comings of this project and participant attrition will also be reported and considered.

## Impact of Physical Exercise on the Spiritual Life of Clergy

There was a positive impact on the spiritual lives of the twenty six clergy who successfully completed the physical exercise for thirty minutes a day, three days a week, for three months. The benefits and positive impact on ministries, churches, pastoral families and the spiritual life of clergy because of this regular rhythm of recess can be surmised from both the qualitative and quantitative data gathered. The benefits became more evident during the uncalculated hours of analyzing the 1846 responses to the “Single Group Project Pre-test / Post-test Study” questions.

As previously mentioned the responses to the project were protected by confidentiality and anonymity measures. However, a worthwhile qualitative story will highlight a unique perspective on the relationship between physical activity and the spiritual life of clergy as being good stewards of the body.

This researcher was contacted by one of the clergy participants who is a close friend. This clergy participant was a former member of the United States Marine Corps, a captain in the Gulf War, and a prime example of a spiritually attuned, physically disciplined fitness guru whom the researcher highly respects and esteems. As a good steward of his body this project participant regularly participated in Iron Man and Marathon events as leisure activities prior to this project. His post-test comments, used by permission, speak for themselves:

The first week of June I was diagnosed with a bulging disc in L-5. My exercise routine normally includes swimming, biking, and running. Due to the injury, I have been able to bike only with a lot more stretching than previously. Since my normal exercise routine has been "interrupted", I have noticed an increased level of stress in my life. Running was the most relaxing time I experienced prior to the injury. Since this effort has been virtually eliminated through June, July, and August, I have noted a greater level of melancholy. My spiritual life has been negatively impacted by decreased exercise due to the injury.

This undisclosed participant's response seems to support the suspicion of this project thesis that there are positive benefits on one's spiritual life when one engages in disciplined physical exercise. The other participants also had occasion to experience the benefits following an increase in their physical activity as highlighted in chapter four.

For the researcher, the most exhilarating revelation would be the section of chapter four that provides a summary of significant quantitative data. The outcome of the T-Test Scores indicated that there appears to be social scientific statistical support that the responses to five questions (17, 22, 23, 24, 30) clearly imply and indicate that the clergy participant's physical activity in this project did have a positive effect on their spiritual disciplines, prayer, awareness of God, bible reading and honoring God with their bodies as a good steward.

These five questions, discussed at the end of chapter four, reveal that 70% (eighteen of twenty-six clergy participants) "agree" or "strongly agree" that physical exercise gives them a stronger desire to pray. Following three months of exercise 80.7% of the clergy participants indicated that their theological reflection, bible study, and prayer were "enhanced" by physical exercise and there was a 25.3% increase in the "awareness of God" through physical exercise according to the twenty-six clergy participants. It is extremely statistically significant that there was a 27% increased desire for these clergy to read their Bible more post project. Twenty-four out of twenty-six clergy participants (92.3%) "agree" or "strongly agree" that when they exercise they honor God with their body. It was encouraging to discover that 22%, more of these clergy "strongly agree" that they honor God with their body through physical exercise and therefore they are better stewards of their bodies following three months of exercise.

This thesis project suspected that there might be a link in the rhythms of physical and spiritual disciplines among clergy. These questions were asked in previous chapters; Could it be that when clergy are physically active there is a correlation and simultaneous desire for spiritual discipline? Could it be that when the body is exercised the mind is sharper and the spiritual sensitivity is peaked? Could it be that when a pastor is less active she is less spiritually alert? The quantitative summary and the qualitative summary coupled with the theological framework and the literature review indicate that there are holistic benefits on one's spiritual life when one engages in physical activity. It can be declared that there are spiritual benefits when clergy engage in physical exercise. It can also be declared that there is a correlation between physical exercise and the spiritual life of these twenty six clergy participants according to their subjective responses.

#### External Challenges and Difficulties Encountered by Clergy

This project endeavored to explore some problematic concerns discussed in chapter one: has ministry prevented a rhythm of exercise among clergy? The analysis of the clergy participant responses revealed that they encountered some difficulty trying to set aside specific exercise time. Some of the external challenges reported were: vacation, family demands, internal lack of desire, ministry schedule, sickness, injuries, and weather but for the most part these are pressures that clergy will always encounter. An alternative approach would be to try this project in a more routine time of the year. Perhaps a fall, winter, or spring timeframe might offer different challenges and there could possibly be different results and outcomes during different seasons of the year.

Obviously, another geographical region might also offer alternative results. Twenty-four of these participants live in Eastern Canada and two live in the South Eastern Region of the United States. In all of these Eastern venues, the clergy participants drive everywhere and parking in close proximity to a building is generally not an issue. Perhaps if this project was endeavored in Central or Western North American Regions or in other countries the results would differ. Some of the variables could be a larger urban center where people regularly walk blocks at a time because there is no parking. Perhaps if the study were done in a geographical area where people didn't have access to automobiles the issues and outcomes would vary but the thesis that physical activity positively effects one's spiritual life should prove true universally. Hypothetically, another factor could be the mean level of clergy physical fitness and physical exercise norms of a particular locale could differ from this particular test single group study.

The twenty-six clergy participants who successfully completed this project were able, at varying degrees, to overcome the challenges that threatened to push recess away. An issue, as presented in the opening chapter, was thoroughly explored: has exercise been a priority among clergy? Before starting the project the clergy demographic concerning exercise routine was 8% exercised "not at all," 32% exercised "occasionally," 28% exercised "often," and only 32% said they exercised "regularly." Following the three month project only one of the twenty-six clergy indicated that they would not continue with their exercise regime. There was no reason offered by this individual who had decided not to continue with a plan of regular physical exercise. However, there is an internal war raging which has been previously described and will be alluded to in a few paragraphs.

## Results Experienced Following Three Months of Exercise

When asked on the post-test, “During the last three months how has your physical fitness changed?” the respondents indicated that 46% were “somewhat better now” and 19% were “much better now.” When asked on the post-test, “Compared to three months ago, how would you rate your physical health?” the respondents indicated that 46% were “somewhat better now” and 15.4% were “much better now.” One would hope that the benefits experienced by these clergy would inspire them to continue this discipline because there are obviously benefits. It can be declared that there were physical benefits to the twenty-six clergy who participated in this project. It would be interesting to follow-up with these twenty-six participants in a year or two and have them redo the post-test to gather data from a longer period of time. It would be interesting to see if the twenty-six clergy really do continue the practice of regular recess and if their testimony of a beneficial correlation would be strengthened.

The anticipated outcome of this project was to see the positive effects of physical activity having a direct impact and benefit on the various ministries of the churches which would promote the growth of the kingdom of God through the local church. When asked, “To what degree, if any, do you think physical activity will provide a benefit to you as a pastor?” one respondent said, “My effectiveness in EVERY area of my ministry is affected by my physical fitness.” Another indicated, “It will help keep mind, body fresh, and having energy. It prevents the growth of sluggishness and neglect. It keeps alive the awareness of life and the world in which we live. A pastor should enjoy all legitimate aspects of life in order to be a well rounded person and leader. It is difficult to provide leadership when you are sickly and weak.”

This project has used three means to analyze the problem and the spiritual impact of clergy neglecting to take care of their bodies physically. Scripture, through the apostle Paul as highlighted in chapter two, proclaims value in physical and spiritual health. Chapter three demonstrated that professional authorities have chimed in on the subject through various publications. Finally, chapter four found that this three month project has leant statistical support concerning the benefits to the spiritual life of clergy when they exercise. There is evidence that a physically and spiritually healthy pastor should more aptly be able to fulfill a lifetime commitment to her call.

This project suspects that clergy do want to glorify God with their bodies but, as mentioned, there is a war waging from within. Appetites of people can distract us from heavenly pursuits in exchange for earthly pursuits. Choices are made. Habits are formed. Temptations abound. Ministry demands cry out and motivations and priorities get shifted around. There is hope for clergy who are inactive to change and become physically active. Twenty-six clergy were able to successfully complete this project and reap the physical, spiritual and emotional benefits which ensued. Clergy have choices to make and they have the opportunity to train their bodies and to run as to get the prize or not. The researcher is constantly faced with the struggles described in this project. Training is not easy but the benefits of physical training for sports can overflow into the spiritual life of a pastor if the pastor moves his or her feet. Clergy need to prioritize being physically active so that they can remain healthy and stay well. A popular Nike mantra declares, Just do it!

An important consideration is how does this thesis project serve to benefit the church? How does this project impact the kingdom of God? If pastors are to stay holistically well and remain healthy physically, it makes sense that they could potentially



live longer. Clergy, as they serve the church, have opportunity to shape their congregation by modeling both spiritual and physical healthy disciplines. Pastors can influence physical fitness in their church and their society if they become living sacrifices.

The Bible warns against slothfulness. This project has been careful not to point fingers and present accusations. However, a sedentary lifestyle can easily lead to slothfulness. Proverbs 19:15 says, “Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep, and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.” Physical activity is a remedy for reviving spiritual deficiency. Pastors, who are sedentary, have opportunity to move from physical inactivity to action and physical mobility. Pastors, like athletes need strength, stamina, and skill for effective ministry. It takes discipline to fill one’s time with recess. This thesis project pronounces that there are spiritual and ministerial benefits that ensue when clergy endeavor to get into good physical and spiritual shape.

### Project Problems Encountered

The attrition rate was discussed in chapter four. As mentioned thirty-six clergy responded out of two hundred and agreed to participate in the three month project. The key to successfully soliciting thirty-five clergy to participate was that they were encouraged to choose what physical activities they wanted to commit to for three months. Once the project was underway surveymonkey.com was extremely convenient but it took about four emails to the thirty-six recruits to have thirty-two pre-test responses. And following the thesis project it took another four or five emails to have thirty complete the

post-test. This resulted in ending up with twenty-six usable pre-test and post-test questionnaires for analysis.

The data collection agent encountered difficulty affirmatively matching some of the pre-test and the post-test data. Only twenty-six could be properly verified and accurately matched. Some of the factors that may have contributed to this confusion was clergy participants utilizing different emails while filling out the questionnaires, leaving out their birthdates or other demographical information on one or both instruments.

Another problem with the project execution which would need to be addressed during future projects was that there appeared to be input problems and some confusion from two participants who were initially filling out the questionnaires, jumped ahead to proof read the questions but couldn't figure out how to go back and fill in the questions they skipped over. The researcher did receive a couple emails from these participants who partially filled out the survey, sent them another link and had them try it again. It was difficult to monitor why people were skipping some questions and possibly having minor difficulties completing it. It is suspected that one or two of the initial thirty-six thought they had filled it out properly, did participate for three months, but did not successfully submit their entire responses. The end result as declared in chapter four was that the quantitative statistical data only utilized the twenty-six participants who used the same identification number and email address on both questionnaires, while the qualitative data was incorporated from all responses.

The researcher would like to share one disheartening event that occurred a few weeks after the conclusion of the project. One of the clergy participants, an acquaintance, approached the researcher three weeks after the project ended and offered

an apology for not completing the post questionnaire. It was apparent that the individual was feeling guilty about non-completion and the participant mentioned physical, medical and ministerial generalities which prevented the successful completion of the project. The researcher endeavored to alleviate the discomfort and distress by thanking the participant for the obvious internal desire to participate, thanking the clergyperson for the interest and the pre-test contribution that was presumably considerably offered. In retrospect, it was obvious that this member of the clergy was distraught, but sadly, that was the last conversation, which the researcher had with this colleague. The pastor who initially agreed to, and desired to, participate in this thesis project committed suicide a month after that conversation. Only the Lord knows the inner turmoil and what was going on in this hurting pastor's mind and life.

### How Does this Project Help the Church?

This thesis project is rooted in the seminary course *Pastor as Person*. What are the various uses for this thesis project? Seminaries have great opportunities to disseminate this important pastoral education concerning the benefits of clergy holistic health. Pastors need to be good stewards of their bodies and attend to their physical activities so that they will faithfully be able to fulfill their call with an improved quality of physical, emotional, and spiritual life. This project could be used as an informative ministerial development tool in Christian higher education and seminaries throughout North America. It could also be used by denominational offices to promote clergy health in their region. The implementation of clergy physical health programs similar to this

project could potentially result in a reduction of health insurance premiums and health care costs for clergy and churches.

This researcher thinks that it is possible for this demographic to reverse the negative unhealthy trends which have been discussed in this project. Local churches could use this information to adapt their pastoral support policies. Churches could offer healthy benefit incentive programs to their clergy. Perhaps wellness oriented programs, sports programs, or fitness club membership fees could be paid for or a percentage could be reimbursed as incentives to promote clergy health. It seems logical, that when clergy are healthier there are tremendous benefits to the church. When this thesis project is linked to the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary online database, it will offer opportunity for individuals or organizations around the world to utilize this project as desired. This information could easily be adapted into a conference, a seminar or a church leadership presentation.

Another use for this thesis would be to make this project available to the four networks which willingly sent out the project email invitation as mentioned in chapter four, *The Moncton Hospital Spiritual and Religious Care Department, The Moncton Area Council of Churches, The Canada Atlantic Church of the Nazarene, The Evangelical Fellowship of Moncton*. If these organizations wanted to make this available it could potentially impact over two hundred clergy across denominational lines.

## Conclusion

This thesis project demonstrates that the apostle Paul, modern day writers, and twenty-six clergy declare a correlation between physical fitness and the spiritual life of

clergy and that physical health can positively affect one's spiritual health. The means of analysis utilized in this "Single Group Project Pre-test / Post-test Research Study" imply that there is not only a link between physical and spiritual disciplines but there is a benefit as described throughout this thesis project. Therefore, it is important for clergy to develop a regular rhythm of recess.

Chapter five has discussed the information gleaned from the project and analyzes the entire thesis project. These conclusions have offered summary synopsis of the analysis, new insights and outcomes have been considered. Opportunity has been afforded to reflect on the results and benefits to the lives of clergy and the church when pastors are good stewards of their bodies by engaging in the discipline of physical exercise. Alternative methods and cautions for future projects have been mulled over. The various uses of this document have been discussed.

This thesis project set out to analyze the relationship between physical exercise and the spiritual life of clergy. The goal of this thesis project was to explore the impact of the personal discipline of physical activity as a necessity in being a good steward of the body while being faithful to fulfill one's pastoral call. The analysis and setting of the problem, the analysis of the theological framework, the analysis of the literature review and the analysis of the results of the three month project permit the researcher to declare that based on the evidence of this thesis project there is a beneficial relationship between physical exercise and the spiritual life of clergy which enable them in a greater way to faithfully fulfill their call while being good stewards of their bodies.

## APPENDIX 1

### PRE-TEST ON CLERGY EXERCISE

#### Pre-test on Clergy Exercise

##### **1. Consent & Release: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL EXERCISE & THE...**

Principal Investigator: Gary Cowper

PLEASE READ THIS AGREEMENT AND AFFIRM YOUR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE BELOW.

This questionnaire is designed to explore the impact of the personal discipline of physical activity as a necessity in being a good steward of the body while being faithful to fulfill ones pastoral call. There will be this pre-test and a post-test questionnaire. Please be assured that all of your answers will be kept strictly confidential. The information that you provide will be presented only in summary form, in combination with the responses of other participants in this study. The answers that you give will never be linked with your name. By completing this questionnaire, you have given your consent that you are a voluntary participant in this study.

## Pre-test on Clergy Exercise

**\* 1. PURPOSE:** This is a research study. The purpose of this research study is to explore the impact of the personal discipline of physical activity as a necessity in being a good steward of the body while being faithful to fulfill ones pastoral call. This study will commence with a pre-test and conclude with a post-test following your three months of exercise, three days a week for thirty minutes. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. You may ask any questions about the research, what you will be asked to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. We are inviting you to participate in this research study because you are a member of the clergy and you are involved in ministry.

**PROCEDURES:** If you agree to proceed, your involvement will last for three months. You will begin your exercise regime of 3 day a week for 30 minutes on June 1, 2011 and finish on August 31st. The pre-test and the post-test will be emailed directly to you. It is entirely up to you how you track and record your progress. You will not be asked for a journal or record of your exercise.

**RISKS:** The possible risks associated with participating in this research project are dependent upon the physical condition of each participant. You should consult your doctor before beginning any exercise regime.

**BENEFITS:** The potential personal benefits that may occur as a result of your participation in this study are: A healthier state of physical fitness. A sense of accomplishment for maintaining or developing a regular rhythm of recess while engaged in ministry. A desire to continue an exercise regime of physical activity. You may also observe a positive impact on your spiritual and emotional health.

**COMPENSATION:** You will not be compensated for participating in this research project.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** Records of participation in this research project will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. If you proceed you will be asked to give yourself an identification number using your birthday and your month of birth. This will serve as your confidential identification number that only you will know. In the event of any report or publication from this study, your identity will not be disclosed. Results will be reported in a summarized manner in such a way that you cannot be identified.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:** Taking part in this research study is voluntary. You may

## Pre-test on Clergy Exercise

choose not to take part at all. If you agree to participate in this study, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to take part, or if you stop participating at any time, your decision will not result in any penalty. If you are unable to complete the three month exercise regime only the information that you submit will be used.

**QUESTIONS:** If you have any questions about this research project, please contact: Gary Cowper at [cowper@nb.sympatico.ca](mailto:cowper@nb.sympatico.ca). If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board at 978 646-4000.

Clicking NEXT implies your signature and indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study.

IF YOU AGREE - type YES  
& click NEXT

2.

**2. Your confidential identification number will be your own COMBINED birth "day" and "month" of birth.**

(For example January 1st would be recorded as "11", The 27th of March would be "273", September 29th = 299, and Dec. 13th would be 1312. Please record the numerical value of your birth day and month?

**3. What denomination are you affiliated with?**

- ☐ Anglican Church   ☐ Baptist Church   ☐ Church of the Nazarene   ☐ Pentecostal   ☐ Presbyterian Church   ☐ United Church of Canada   ☐ Wesleyan Church   ☐ Other

**4. I have been a minister for the following number of years:**

- ☐ 1-5   ☐ 6-10   ☐ 11-15   ☐ 16-20   ☐ 21-25   ☐ 26-30   ☐ 31-35   ☐ 36-40   ☐ 40+

**5. During the past 12 months I have engaged in regular physical exercise:**

- ☐ Not at all   ☐ Occasionally   ☐ Often   ☐ Regularly

**6. In general, would you say your physical health is:**

- ☐ Poor   ☐ Fair   ☐ Good   ☐ Very Good   ☐ Excellent



## Pre-test on Clergy Exercise

**7. Do you currently have physical barriers that could compromise your ability to engage in physical activities?**

☐ None ☐ Very Mild ☐ Mild ☐ Moderate ☐ Severe ☐ Very Severe

**8. Have you experienced aches and pains during the past three months?**

☐ None ☐ Very Mild ☐ Mild ☐ Moderate ☐ Severe ☐ Very Severe

**9. In general, would you say your emotional health is:**

☐ Poor ☐ Fair ☐ Good ☐ Very Good ☐ Excellent

**10. Over the past three months have emotional problems negatively impacted:**

**Time spent doing ministry?**

☐ yes ☐ no

**11. Over the past three months have emotional problems negatively impacted:**

**Accomplishing less than you would like?**

☐ yes ☐ no

**12. Over the past three months have emotional problems negatively impacted:**

**Difficulty performing ministry? (i.e. extra effort)**

☐ yes ☐ no

**13. During the past three months to what extent, have physical or emotional problems interfered with your normal social activities with family, friends, neighbors, or church life?**

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Moderately ☐ Quite a bit ☐ Extremely

**14. How much of the time during the past three months did you feel full of energy?**

☐ None of the time ☐ Little of the time ☐ Some of the time ☐ Most of the time ☐ All of the time

**15. In general, would you say your spiritual health is:**

☐ Poor ☐ Fair ☐ Good ☐ Very Good ☐ Excellent

## Pre-test on Clergy Exercise

**16. During the past three months your spiritual disciplines (Theological reflection, Bible study & Prayer) occur:**

- ☐ Not at all      ☐ Occasional      ☐ Often      ☐ Regular

**17. To what degree does your level of physical activity affect your spiritual disciplines (Theological reflection, Bible study & Prayer)?**

- ☐ Not at all      ☐ Very Slightly      ☐ Slightly      ☐ Moderately Enhance      ☐ Extremely Enhances

**18. To what degree does your church support and encourage your physical activity?**

- ☐ Not at all      ☐ Very Slightly      ☐ Slightly      ☐ Moderately Encourage      ☐ Extremely Encourage

## 3. Rate your response.

For this next section, please continue and select the corresponding response to each statement:

**19. When I exercise I feel better physically.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly Agree

**20. When I exercise I feel better emotionally.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly Agree

**21. When I exercise, I feel better spiritually.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly Agree

**22. When I exercise, I have a stronger desire to pray.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly Agree

**23. When I exercise, I am more aware of God.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly Agree

**24. When I exercise, I want to read my Bible more.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly Agree

**25. When I exercise, I deal better with stress.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly Agree

## Pre-test on Clergy Exercise

**26. When I exercise, I feel better about myself.**

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

**27. When I exercise, I have a clearer mind.**

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

**28. When I exercise, I am more useful as a minister.**

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

**29. When I exercise, I feel guilty for ceasing ministry.**

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

**30. When I exercise, I honor God with my body.**

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

**31. When I exercise, I feel like I'm being a good steward of my body.**

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

## 4. Please comment openly on these final 4 questions:

**32. Briefly describe challenges that could interrupt your regular rhythm of physical activity during the next three months.**



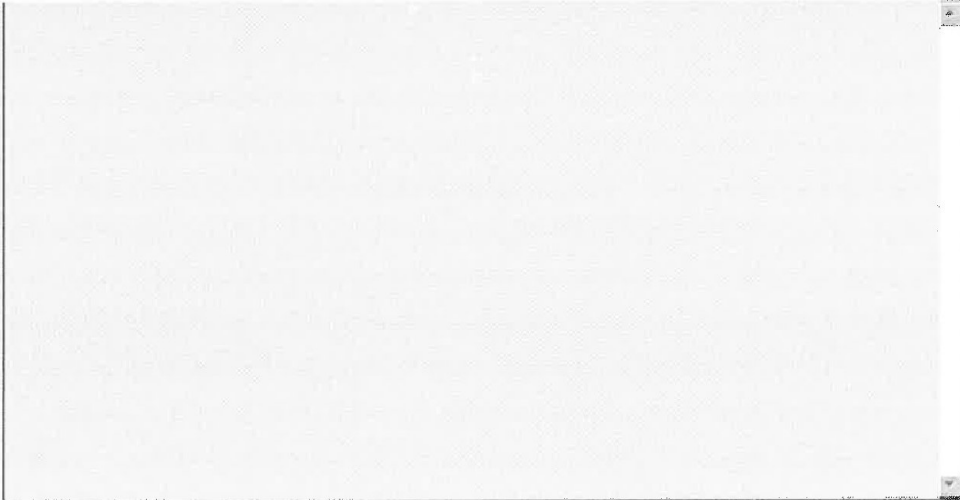
## Pre-test on Clergy Exercise

**33. What impact does physical activity have on enabling you to carry out your pastoral call?**

**34. Do you think there is a link between physical discipline and spiritual disciplines (Theological reflection, Bible study & Prayer)? Briefly explain.**

## Pre-test on Clergy Exercise

**35. To what degree, if any, do you think physical activity will provide a benefit to you as a pastor?**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a written response to the question above. It occupies the upper half of the page below the question.

## APPENDIX 2

### POST-TEST ON CLERGY EXERCISE

#### Post-test on Clergy Exercise

##### 1. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL EXERCISE & THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF CLER...

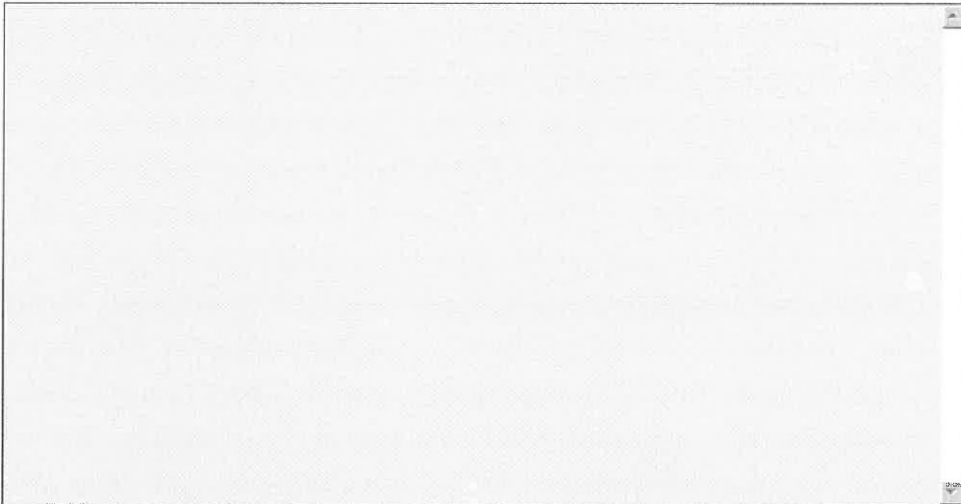
Principal Investigator: Gary Cowper

Thank you for exploring the impact of the personal discipline of physical activity as a necessity in being a good steward of the body while being faithful to fulfill ones pastoral call.

This is your final post-test questionnaire.

As previously explained please be assured that all of your answers will be kept strictly confidential. The information that you provide will be presented only in summary form, in combination with the responses of other participants in this study. The answers that you give will never be linked with your name. By completing this questionnaire, you complete your voluntary participation in this project. Thanks

**1. Please comment on the impact of physical exercise on your spiritual life during the past three months.**



##### 2. Record your birth "day and "month"

**2. Your confidential identification number will be your own COMBINED birth "day" and "month" of birth.**

**(For example January 1st would be recorded as "11", The 27th of March would be "273", September 29th = 299, and Dec. 13th would be 1312. Please record the numerical value of your birth day and month?**

## Post-test on Clergy Exercise

### 3. What denomination are you affiliated with?

- ☐ Anglican Church   ☐ Baptist Church   ☐ Church of the Nazarene   ☐ Pentecostal Church   ☐ Presbyterian Church   ☐ United Church of Canada   ☐ Wesleyan Church   ☐ Other

### 4. Do you plan to continue a regular rhythm of physical exercise?

- ☐ Yes   ☐ No

### 5. During the last three months, how has your physical fitness changed?

- ☐ Somewhat worse now   ☐ Same   ☐ Somewhat better now   ☐ Much better now

### 6. In general, would you say your physical health is:

- ☐ Poor   ☐ Fair   ☐ Good   ☐ Very Good   ☐ Excellent

### 7. Compared to three months ago, how would you rate your physical health?

- ☐ Somewhat worse now   ☐ Same   ☐ Somewhat better now   ☐ Much better now

### 8. Have you experienced aches and pains during the past three months?

- ☐ None   ☐ Very Mild   ☐ Mild   ☐ Moderate   ☐ Severe   ☐ Very Severe

### 9. In general, would you say your emotional health is:

- ☐ Poor   ☐ Fair   ☐ Good   ☐ Very Good   ☐ Excellent

### 10. Over the past three months have emotional problems negatively impacted:

#### Time spent doing ministry?

- ☐ yes   ☐ no

### 11. Over the past three months have emotional problems negatively impacted:

#### Accomplishing less than you would like?

- ☐ yes   ☐ no

### 12. Over the past three months have emotional problems negatively impacted:

#### Difficulty performing ministry? (i.e. extra effort)

- ☐ yes   ☐ no

### Post-test on Clergy Exercise

**13. During the past three months to what extent, have physical or emotional problems interfered with your normal social activities with family, friends, neighbors, or church life?**

- ☐ Not at all      ☐ Slightly      ☐ Moderately      ☐ Quite a bit      ☐ Extremely

**14. How much of the time during the past three months did you feel full of energy?**

- ☐ None of the time      ☐ Little of the time      ☐ Some of the time      ☐ Most of the time      ☐ All of the time

**15. In general, would you say your spiritual health is:**

- ☐ Poor      ☐ Fair      ☐ Good      ☐ Very Good      ☐ Excellent

**16. During the past three months your spiritual disciplines (Theological reflection, Bible study & Prayer) occur:**

- ☐ Not at all      ☐ Occasional      ☐ Often      ☐ Regular

**17. To what degree does your level of physical activity affect your spiritual disciplines (Theological reflection, Bible study & Prayer)?**

- ☐ Not at all      ☐ Very Slightly      ☐ Slightly      ☐ Moderately Enhance      ☐ Extremely Enhances

**18. To what degree does your church support and encourage your physical activity?**

- ☐ Not at all      ☐ Very Slightly      ☐ Slightly      ☐ Moderately Encourage      ☐ Extremely Encourage

### 3. Rate your response.

For this next section, please continue and select the corresponding response to each statement:

**19. When I exercise I feel better physically.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly Agree

**20. When I exercise I feel better emotionally.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly Agree



## Post-test on Clergy Exercise

**21. When I exercise, I feel better spiritually.**

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

**22. When I exercise, I have a stronger desire to pray.**

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

**23. When I exercise, I am more aware of God.**

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

**24. When I exercise, I want to read my Bible more.**

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

**25. When I exercise, I deal better with stress.**

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

**26. When I exercise, I feel better about myself.**

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

**27. When I exercise, I have a clearer mind.**

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

**28. When I exercise, I am more useful as a minister.**

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

**29. When I exercise, I feel guilty for ceasing ministry.**

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

**30. When I exercise, I honor God with my body.**

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

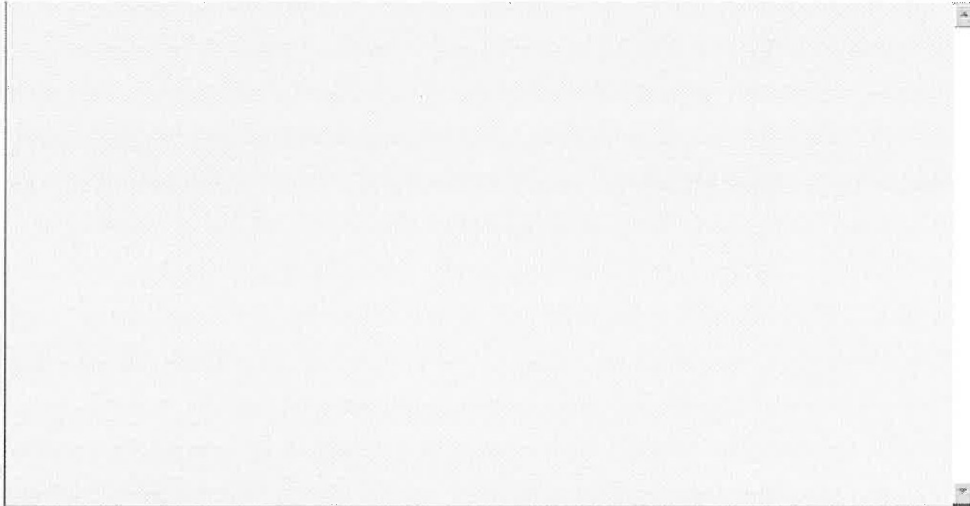
**31. When I exercise, I feel like I'm being a good steward of my body.**

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

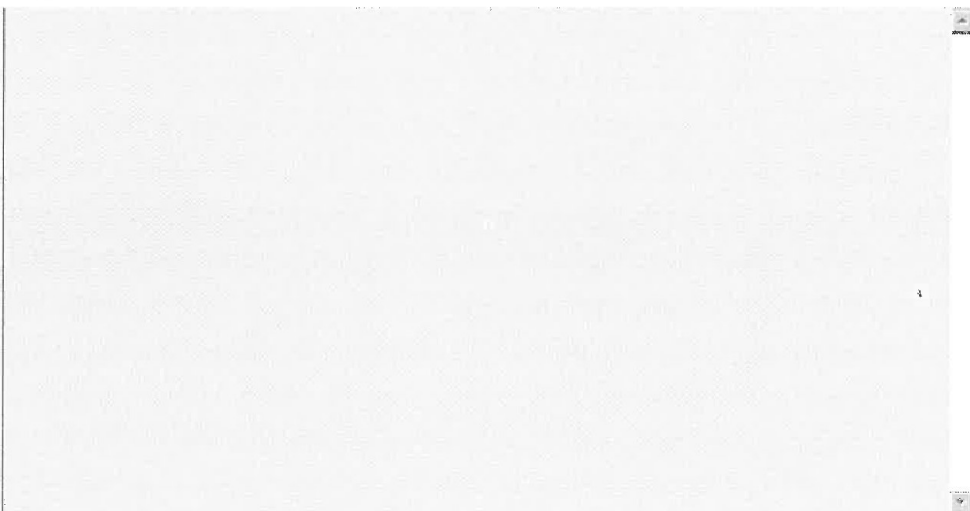
**4. Please comment openly on these final questions:**

## Post-test on Clergy Exercise

**32. What challenges did you face as you tried to maintain a regular rhythm of physical activity during the last three months.**

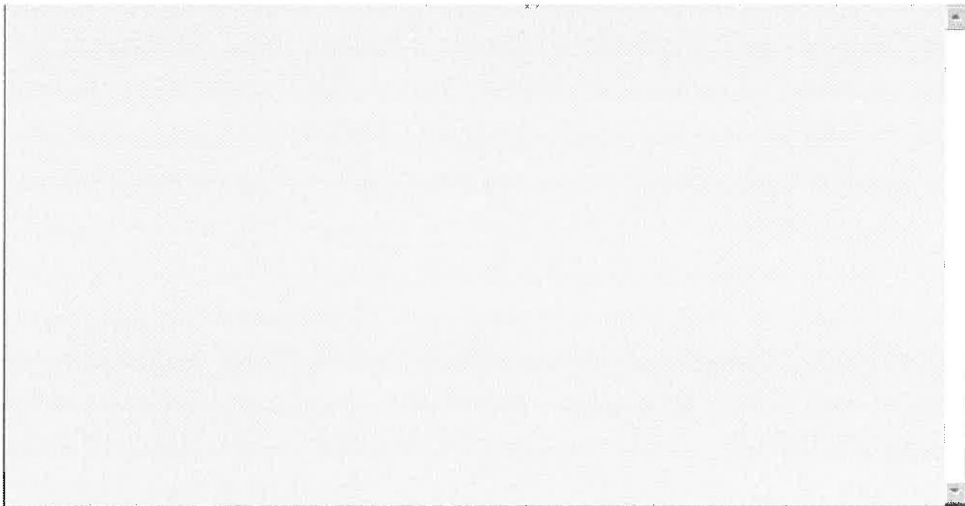


**33. What impact does physical activity have on enabling you to carry out your pastoral call?**



### Post-test on Clergy Exercise

**34. Do you think there is a link between physical discipline and spiritual disciplines (Theological reflection, Bible study, & Prayer)? Briefly explain.**



**35. To what degree, if any, has physical activity brought about a change in your ministry during the past three months?**



## Post-test on Clergy Exercise

**36. What forms of exercise did you choose to do during the past three months?  
(Please check all that apply.)**

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> aerobics  | <input type="checkbox"/> stationary equipment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bicycling | <input type="checkbox"/> swimming             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> jogging   | <input type="checkbox"/> walking              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pilates   | <input type="checkbox"/> weight lifting       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sports    | <input type="checkbox"/> other                |

### APPENDIX 3

#### INITIAL EMAIL INVITATION LETTER

Would you help me by cutting, pasting, and sending out this to your contacts under the subject?

Subject: Help Cowper Clergy Project.

If you can help with Gary's project please respond directly to him at [cowper@nb.sympatico.ca](mailto:cowper@nb.sympatico.ca)

Dear clergy person:

I have expressed to some of you that as a part of my continuing education at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary I am working on an interesting project this summer. A number of you have expressed interest in helping me by volunteering as participants. I now officially invite all of you to respond.

The Project Title: The Result of a Regular Rhythm of Recess Activity among Clergy.

Will you consider:

- Engaging in at least 30 minutes of recess involving physical activity\*, 3 times a week for 3 months. (\*any form of exercise or variations of physical activities desirable to you)
- I would provide you with School Release Form, which needs to be signed.
- I would provide you with a pre-project questionnaire (30 questions) and ask you to return it to me by May 31<sup>st</sup>.
- You choose your personalized exercise regime, which will begin on June 1<sup>st</sup> and conclude on August 31<sup>st</sup>.
- I would provide you with a final post- project questionnaire where you would consider the results and ramifications. (Changes, observations, benefits, revelations, difficulties.)

Are you interested? I need to have at least 30 Pastors as a focus group who will commit to:

3 months of 3 days a week for 30 minutes a day. (you choose your exercises)

I plan to communicate with you via email before you start and when you finish. If you have any questions please email me at [cowper@nb.sympatico.ca](mailto:cowper@nb.sympatico.ca)

Again, this email is my personal invitation to you. I will only be sending an information package to those who respond. Please respond as soon as possible. Thanks

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## VITA

The author of this work is Gary Lawrence Cowper. He was born to Edwin and Lois Cowper in Woodstock, New Brunswick, Canada on Good Friday, March 27, 1970. He received his formal education in Woodstock and graduated from Woodstock High School in 1988. He won the MVP award for Basketball his senior year.

He attended Bethany Bible College in Sussex, New Brunswick and graduated in 1992 with a Bachelor of Arts in Religion with a major in Youth Ministry. He married his childhood sweetheart Jan Carola MacMullin on August 17, 1991.

In 1992, Gary accepted a youth ministry position at the Sherwood Church of the Nazarene in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island where he was associate pastor until 2001. His firstborn, Andrew Edwin was born in 1993 and his daughter Janelle Reanne was born in 1997. Gary became an ordained elder in the Church of the Nazarene on May 27, 1994.

He accepted a call to pastor the Fredericton First Church of the Nazarene in 2001. After serving in Fredericton, New Brunswick for three years he responded to a pastoral call in Moncton, New Brunswick. Moncton First Church of the Nazarene is where Gary is currently serving as senior pastor.

After eight years of ministry, Gary started his graduate work in 2000 at Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri and graduated with the Master of Divinity, Cum Laude on May 8, 2005.

Gordon-Conwell's Pastoral Skills Doctor of Ministry Track fascinated Gary Cowper, he attended his first residency in April 2009 and his final residency was in 2011. Gary expects to complete his studies and graduate in May 2012.